An Open Letter to the Apostolic Delegate

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THE UNITED STATES & SOUTHERN AFRICA

PETER WALSHE

TRANSFORMATION IN CAMBODIA

DAVID P. CHANDLER

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NEWS & VIEWS

Rome Rethinks

Traditionalists who like to believe that the Church is a settled institution, with concrete answers for all problems and situations, must have been jolted a bit by the recent International Canon Law Congress at Rome's Pontifical Gregorian University. It dealt with "unsettled" questions on a variety of moral and theological issues. To wit:

On Marriage: What is the connection between the contract of marriage and the sacrament of marriage? What about the "sacramental" nature of the marriages of baptized Catholics who have lost the faith and given up its practice? Are such marriages still to be considered "sacramental"? Given the new emphases on the importance of personal values and conjugal love, on freedom of conscience and religious liberty, how should the Church revise its laws on marriage to meet these sensitivities in the pluralistic society?

On Canon Law: What is *Church:* How can individuals defend their rights against Church authority? What sort of structures should be available to individual defendants? What methods of redress does a priest have who feels he is being unjustly treated by his bishop?

On Canon Law: What is the nature of Canon Law? What sort of "law" should the Church have? Is there a contradiction between a Church of law and a Church of love?

On Church-State Relations: What about concordats between the Vatican and nation states? Are they outmoded? Should they all be scrapped?

Most of the questions were posed by Jesuit Father Clarence Gallagher of the Gregorian faculty. The answers weren't forthcoming from the Congress. But that may be less important than the fact that the questions were being asked—in Rome, yet.

New Game Department

There's no tellin' the players anymore without a scorecard.

In a number of dioceses of the U.S., Church officials are fighting the "interference" of the National Labor Relations Board (NLRB) in parochial-school employment practices.

The NLRB has ordered these several dioceses to hold union-representation elections for lay teachers of their parochial schools. The dioceses have refused, claiming that the federal agency has no right to interfere in the business of a religious institution.

So how are interested parties lining up?

In criticism of the dominant Catholic strategy: the executive board of the National Assembly of Women Religious ("If Church officials in dioceses involved in this type of litigation with the NLRB had applied their [the Bishops'] guideline that 'workers have the right to form unions,' the present situation in Los Angeles, Philadelphia, Fort Wayne-South Bend, Gary and Chicago might not have occurred").

In support of the dominant Catholic strategy: Americans United for Separation of Church and State ("There is no constitutional mandate for the NLRB to intrude into the hiring and personnel practices of educational institutions which are integral to a church's mission").

Americans United was formerly POAU.

Balke's Complaint

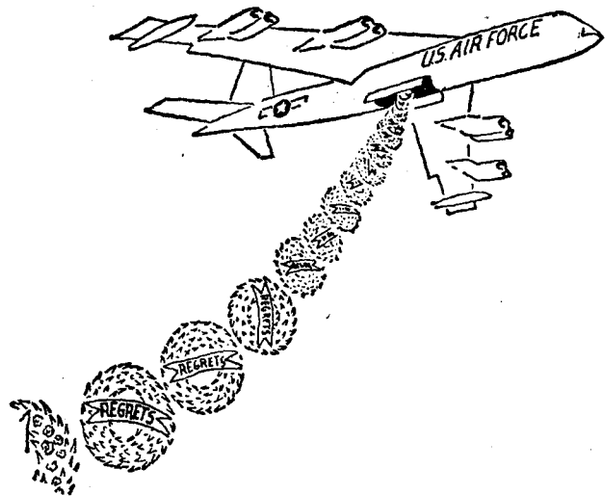
The bishop said it was all a misunderstanding. He wasn't "advocating" one candidate over the other "on the basis of religion" in the recent special Minnesota congressional election to fill the seat of U.S. Secretary of Agriculture Bob Bergland. He was just exercising his right "to speak my views privately" when he appended that postscript to his letter to priests of the Diocese of Crookston just before the election that pitted Arlan Strangeland, Independent-Republican, against Michael Sullivan, Democratic-Farmer Labor candidate.

Heavens, protested Bishop Victor H. Balke, the offended prelate, after news of the postscript hit the fan, his comment "didn't even mention the religious denomination of either candidate."

So what was the postscript that ostensibly was so unfairly interpreted? Read and decide for yourself the merits of Balke's complaint:

"As you know, the primary election for a successor to Rep. Bergland is being held on Feb. 8. Please encourage your people to vote that day. (What cannot be said publicly by us is that a small turnout will hurt Mike Sullivan, DFL candidate, who is very pro-Church, but will help Mr. Arlan Strangeland, whose voting record has been very negative as far as we are concerned.) So again, please emphasize strongly this coming Sunday the right of your people to vote. Thank you."

Incidentally, Strangeland won. Loser: Sullivan . . . and the bishop.



de Konk, Le Monde, Paris

Odds and Ends

—Hygenists, have hope. At their meeting in May, the U.S. bishops will discuss for the third time whether they should ask the Vatican for permission to allow reception of Communion in the hand. The practice is already common in 40 countries.

—"Jesus jeans," no; "Jesus jackets," si. That's what it amounts to. . . . Or don't you remember last year's Vatican-New York Archdiocese brouhaha over those denim shorts? No matter. Just get ready for the neatest bit of religious gimmickry since Bishop Sheen was on television. Yes, "Jesus jackets." They're four-color, silk-screened items designed to slip over large-sized cereal boxes. They're intended to build the soul while the cornflakes build the body. As one munches, one reads Bible verses, grapples with a Jesus quiz and meditates. Turn the Jesus jacket around and there's a blank space for taping in Bible verses to be mailed weekly to jacketeers. The blank space is captioned "Daily Bread." No kidding. According to Religious News Service, "full credit for the design and execution" (that can't be meant literally) goes to Robert C. Nelson, chairman of the art department at the College of St. Catherine, St. Paul. Personally, I'd rather meditate on Jesus, jeans. JOHN DEEDY

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CORRESPONDENCE

Ordaining Women

Sonoma, Calif.

To the Editors: According to the news reports, Rome has denied women the right to be ordained priests, on the grounds that they "cannot mirror Christ."

Should the Church authorities pursue this reasoning to its logical conclusion, they would also have to deny women their right to the "State of Grace"—which, as I understand it—denotes the Real Presence of the Spirit of Christ in the human body/soul, male or female.

It's true, women cannot *mirror* the Christ of two thousand years ago—but neither can men. Both however—given the Grace—can *radiate* the contemporary Spirit of Jesus, who returned at Pentecost to make his home in anyone who loves him. JUSTINE CAREY

Cambridge, Mass.

To the Editors: I disagree.

Perhaps since women as priests is a new experience, some may need the experience of both male and female serving the Eucharist together, as advocated in recent articles by M. Novak and H. Cox [Feb. 18].

But the priesthood is one: any human being duly consecrated, fully represents the Great High Priest.

The Novak-Cox dual-sex formula is a reversal of that unfortunate document from the Sacred Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith: both make the same mistake. Sex is unimportant in the priesthood. It is part of the priest, but it is of no liturgical significance. (Race is also part of the priest, but again, is of no liturgical significance, etc., etc.) HUMAN-NESS is what is important to the priesthood.

It is exactly by making sex so extraordinary in the priesthood that groups of Christians say that the nature of the priesthood is being changed, and that only an ecumenical council of bishops can make such a dogmatic,

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AGAIN, THE MID EAST

Henry Kissinger is quoted by Edward R. F. Sheehan as saying that Israel has no foreign policy—only domestic politics. For a month or two during the presidential campaign it seemed as if the same thing could be said about the United States as far as Middle Eastern policy was concerned. Each candidate vied with the other in taking extravagant pro-Israel positions—in the process, of course, discouraging Arab friends of the United States and encouraging intransigent opposition to any kind of compromise on the part of right-wingers in Israel. Now, with the campaign well behind us, Mr. Carter is finding it necessary to put aside platform rhetoric and confront Middle Eastern reality squarely—and in the process is finding out the hard way that President Carter must choose his words far more carefully than Candidate Carter had to.

Significant steps toward renewed negotiations in the Middle East are already being taken, and Secretary of State Cyrus Vance's recent trip to the area was only one indication. President Anwar el-Sadat of Egypt, apparently with the approval of the other Arab leaders, is urging the United States to take the initiative for peace in the Middle East. Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin of Israel is calling for a renewed Geneva peace conference for the area, modeled on the European security conference in Helsinki in 1975. Even hard-line Israeli Defense Minister and Rabin opponent Shimon Peres has predicted "meaningful negotiations" between Israel and its Arab neighbors this year, although he would prefer Kissinger-style step-by-step diplomacy to the overall Geneva conference advocated by the Arab nations and officially by his own government. Former Secretary of State Kissinger thinks the Carter administration has an unprecedented opportunity to achieve peace in the Middle East. Syria and Egypt have decided to form a "united political leadership" precisely to be ready for a new round of peace talks. And

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finally, Saudi Arabia has made it plain that it expects the United States to take positive action in the Middle East in exchange for its efforts to hold the line on oil prices and avoid another oil embargo. All in all, a determined effort to achieve some kind of settlement in that troubled area seems certain, indeed imperative if we are to avoid either another war or another oil embargo. The Lebanese debacle shows what can happen in the region, and not only in Lebanon. There are situations where doing nothing is the best course, but the Middle East today is not one of them.

This is not to say that negotiations will be easy. At the end of his recent Middle Eastern trip, Secretary of State Vance reported that although he found a strong desire for peace among all concerned, the Arabs and the Israelis remain deeply divided on how to resolve the key issues that have blocked a settlement. Nonetheless, one hopeful fact is that negotiations this time will begin with a radically changed position for the Palestinian Liberation Organization. Badly battered in Lebanon, the PLO is under severe pressure from its Arab allies to scale down its political objectives. For the first time PLO leader Yasir Arafat has announced that his movement now accepts the idea of Palestinian state on the West Bank and in Gaza, although without explicitly repudiating, at least so far, its earlier insistence on a secular Arab-Jewish state in all of Palestine, which implied the disappearance of Israel. In an effort to break the diplomatic impasse in the area, President Sadat proposed that the Palestinians should form "an official and declared link" with Jordan even before a Geneva conference is reconvened —a move that might restrain the hard-liners in the PLO. Interesting in this connection is the reaction of UN Secretary General Kurt Waldheim who also recently returned from the Middle East; a process of evolution is going on inside the PLO, he thinks, that might lead to a "smaller solution" than the old die-hard PLO position. The PLO is a long way from bearing an olive branch, of course, but there are increasing signs of a factional rift inside the organization in which it would be helpful for the United States to encourage the moderates.

Aside from this, what should be the U.S. stance in the coming negotiations? One constant in United States policy is our insistence on the existence and security of Israel, and this is not negotiable. But this does not mean that the U.S. should approve of every position expressed and every action taken by particular Israeli governments and statesmen, and those in the U.S. who are pro-Israel should not take such a stance as being in any way antagonistic to Israel. Rigidity is the enemy of peace, and sometimes Israeli leaders need firm U.S. help to protect them from the pressures of hard-liners at home—those who imagine, for instance, that they can refuse even to negotiate about the territorial gains of the 1967 war. (The counterparts of such Israeli hard-liners, of course, are those Arabs who will not face the fact that if Israel is to give up territory, it must get something firm in the shape of peace in return.)

At this point officials of the outgoing government in Israel are dubious about reports of growing PLO moderation, and this is certainly understandable. For Israel, survival is always at stake. But if a settlement is ever to be reached in the Middle East, a beginning must be made, and there can be no peace until the Palestinian problem is solved, even by some sort of union with Jordan, perhaps. In any case, time is not on Israel's side, and the United States can best show its traditional friendship for and support of Israel by working for compromises that will lead to a lasting peace in the area. Israelis and Arabs alike could receive no better gift.

COMING

MAURICE R. BERUBE writes on "The Revolt Against College":

"The recession of the seventies has also affected college graduates and diminished the value of a degree; larger-scale unemployment has threatened the college degree as an essential passport to the middle class. Consequently, many youngsters are rethinking the prospect of attending college. In the past eight years, the proportion of college-age youngsters attending college has dropped from 44 percent to 33 percent."

WASHINGTON REPORT

THE IMMORALISTS

It's unusual enough to have a debate, however desultory, going on United States foreign policy. It's unusual enough, for that matter, for the United States to have something that might reasonably be referred to as a foreign policy. Thus there is cause to be grateful for the discussions, or at least expressions of dissenting opinion, taking place here over President Carter's reiterated support for human rights in all nations, with some stress so far on the condition of human rights in the Soviet Union, a condition which has not been

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notably flourishing since 1917, nor, if the truth be known, in Russia and its fiefdoms within historical memory.

The dissenters from Carter's statements and gestures on the subject decry what they refer to as "moralism" in foreign policy, aver that it is not the right of the United States to attempt to interfere with the internal affairs of other nations, least of all with those of the Soviet Union, our fellow-colossus bestriding the world without whose surreptitious cooperation, the world might not be as well bestridden as it is by the two of us. The dissenters from the Carter concern for human rights, who for convenience can be called the Immoralists, claim that morality has no place in foreign policy, will more often than not get in the way of the professional pursuit of legitimate foreign policy goals, and besides all that is profoundly embarrassing to Immoralists who like to think themselves at least as sophisticated in these matters as their Soviet colleagues.

There are a number of ironies floating about the situation. The first, of course, is that moralism in foreign relations is exactly what has been practiced by the Immoralists since at least the epoch of John Foster Dulles, perhaps since Dean Acheson, the latter being arguable, the former *et seq.* not so in the least. Dulles, traipsing the world in his flapping galoshes, believed passionately in the morality of what he and the *et seq.* succession all called The Free World, no less passionately in the inherent immorality of the Soviet Union and all its works and all its pomps. The difference is that these old moralists whose descendants are now proud to be Immoralists pretty well reduced the matter of morality to names. Anything called Communism was immoral; hence, anything not called Communism was moral, anything called Anti-Communism positively beatific. It was a new form—and, of course, a new meaning—of Nominalism, but it was deeply moralistic. Its embodiment in The Free World was a collection of more or less democratic states in Europe all hanging grimly on to their overseas possessions as long as they could and by whatever means they could, with American help of various kinds, to the total disregard of the desires for self-government by those hung onto; a collection of self-created military dictators in Spanish- or Portuguese-speaking countries on both sides of the Atlantic; and in Asia a corresponding collection of military dictators in great part created by ourselves in the name of freedom.

What the Dullesian-Nixonian moralizers were moralizing about was the absolute evil of Communism; this automatically made opposition to Communism not only holy, but, in some mystical way, American.

The second great public irony attending the Immoralists' call for amorality in international relations is that, of course, the Soviets have been no less passionately moralists and moralizing in their own foreign policy than was the Dulles-to-Nixon line in ours. That's what the Brezhnev Doctrine was all about. It was certainly easy enough for cynics in the West, including myself, to point out that in practice the Brezhnev Doctrine simply cast a cloak of dialectical legitimacy over the Soviets doing what they wanted to do, namely, invade Eastern European nations at will, shoot up the citizens and retire in good order filled with the pleasant feelings of Great Power status reasserted, the same good feelings we ourselves got, at so much higher costs, from slaughtering the peasants of Southeast Asia; nevertheless, the Brezhnev Doctrine on its face was appropriately doctrinal, a matter of preserving the purity of the deposit of faith as handed down from Marx, Engels and Lenin, a remarkably close approximation of the doctrine of papal infallibility, theological in its ultimate concerns, moralizing in its immediate ones.

Moreover, the Brezhnev Doctrine, although it established a locus for the source of doctrinal purity, was hardly the first moralizing expression of Soviet policy either abroad or at home. The great post-Lenin split between Stalin and Trotsky, while easily interpreted as a fairly pure example of personal aggrandizement on Stalin's part, was nevertheless conducted on both sides in doctrinal terms.

At any rate, morality in foreign policy is hardly an invention of Jimmy Carter's insofar as the two great powers are concerned. Still, there is a profound difference and it is one from which the rest of us, ordinary citizens of both superstates, as well as those of our clients, may eventually profit. The difference is this: whereas both John Foster Dulles and Leonid Brezhnev regarded morality as something to be inflicted upon others from outside and above, Carter, thanks no doubt to his being the first seriously religious person to occupy his position since I'd hesitate to say when, regards morality as primarily something that governs the individual, or the individual nation, from within, something one conforms to, rather than something imposed upon one from without. Hence, after the remarks and gestures objected to by the Immoralists, Carter proceeded to execute an act of governmental morality by restoring the right of Americans to travel freely throughout the world. This was a matter that never concerned the Immoralists, whose administrations of both parties took for granted the government's right to restrict our freedom of travel: Cuba, for example, had resisted our beneficent effort to replace Castro by Howard Hunt in his comic red wig, therefore no American could travel to Cuba; Vietnam had similarly resisted our efforts to establish peace and justice there through bombing, therefore no Americans. Abruptly, Americans are delivered from the capricious judgments of Ms. Frances Knight of the Passport Office as to which nations are good and which bad. It's a small thing, but a significant one. If Carter continues in this remarkable interpretation of

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morality as something that governs the conduct of the person professing the morality, even if he happens to be a chief of state, who knows, he may get around to halting the CIA's reading of our mail, the FBI's disruption of the legitimate political activities of groups that believe in universal medical care available to all and other wild-eyed socialist schemes.

The Soviet Union has, of course, responded to Carter's allegations about human rights by pointing out, quite correctly, that the situation of human rights in the United States still leaves quite a bit to be desired. That's splendid! The situation does indeed leave much to be desired, though there is certainly no comparison between conditions in the two superstates. But the rest of us have nothing to lose, much to gain, if the two governments take to pointing out publicly how abysmally each is treating its citizens.

There was a period—now hardly recallable—when Soviet-American relations were dominated by a constantly changing spirit of a place: Vienna, Camp David, Glassboro, N.J., wherever. The place was simply the name of the last place that two big cheeses of the two big-cheese countries had met. In that dim and distant epoch, there was always much talk about the means of competition between the two. Arms and war, it used to be genially agreed, must give way to competition in economics, agriculture, industry—read those last three words in ital. caps. with exclamation points and visualize appropriate symbols of American enterprise, Soviet peasants and workers, that's it.

Well, as things have worked out, the economic competition hasn't been all that competitive nor all that productive, nothing at all, for example, compared to the arms competition. Why not give human rights a try for the next round?

FRANK GETLEIN

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DEMOCRATIC SOCIALISTS

TIME FOR STOCK-TAKING

" 'Every valley shall be raised, the mountains and hills shall be brought low, and the crooked ways made straight'."

The words were the words of Isaiah, but the voice was that of a large black man, Cleveland Robinson, a national officer of District 65, Distributive Workers of America, speaking to the third national convention of the Democratic Socialist Organizing Committee held in Chicago a few weeks ago.

Robinson is blind and his blindness seemed to add a peculiar power to the words of the prophet. You don't have to be religious to feel the wave of faith and hope that moved around the hall. Faith and hope, in fact, were conspicuous qualities throughout the convention.

The DSOC, founded in 1973, has lived long enough and accomplished enough to mark itself as a unique organization in the history of American politics. Ever since Roosevelt and the New Deal took the starch and the membership out of the Socialist Party by borrowing much of its program, socialists in America have had a hard and lonely time. The hardness of their time was in no way softened by American Stalinists who took the appeal out of "production for use and not for profit" by tying it to a Russian dictatorship. Periodically SP members would split away, usually calling themselves Social Democrats and eventually supplying theoretical support for George Meany, Lyndon Johnson, the Vietnam war, welfare capitalism and the notion that guns *and* butter are both politically possible and desirable.

Meanwhile, even Norman Thomas lost faith in the usefulness of tilting at windmills and running for president. But until Michael Harrington (not the Congressman, the other one) and DSOC came along, there was no organization that retained a distinctly socialist, left-leaning identity and still committed itself to the idea that the correct path for socialists in America lay within the left wing of the Democratic Party. They were encouraged in this by the success of the McGovernites in winning control of the '72 convention. Such later developments as the election of Sam Brown in Colorado and the near success of Tom Hayden in California have persuaded even some on the New Left that this may be the smart strategy. One sign of agreement is the editorial line of *In These Times,* the socialist weekly founded last fall by an interesting group of Old, New and Newer Leftists.

The Chicago convention was a time for stock-taking on this strategy. Most DSOC members worked for Fred Harris and/or Mo Udall, but in November the policy was to vote for Carter. At Chicago there were no audible regrets, although Irving Howe, a most distinguished speaker, brought the house down by pointing out that some of Carter's recession remedies were "no more than Gerry Ford disguised as a peanut." There were unkind words for some of Carter's appointments and kind words for some of his appointments. Liz McPike, an AFSCME union organizer, said she was glad she voted for Carter if only because he had the heart and the guts to send Amy to an integrated public school in Washington, but she warned that "Carter and

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the Democratic Congress were elected by the people who suffer the most from unemployment, inflation, inequality and deterioration of our cities—they can be forceful advocates for that constituency or they can walk a middle line that goes nowhere." In effect, judgment suspended and delayed. In general, however, the feeling was that no matter how disappointing Carter turns out to be, the hopes for the future are in better shape than if Ford had won another four years of veto power.

The overwhelming emphasis of the convention was on holding the Democrats' feet to the fire of full employment. As Harrington put it, "full employment is the key to progress in every sector of the society"—racial and sexual discrimination in the labor market, health insurance, foreign aid, development of the Third World, disarmament. He stressed the need for a strong Humphrey-Hawkins bill and said that the retreat of many liberals on full employment marks the probable dissolution of the ideology formulated by the New Deal and underlines the necessity for a new push toward socialist solutions. As a start he proposed a publicly-owned gas and oil corporation, nationalization of railroads within a comprehensive plan for mass transit, public and employee representatives on the boards of all major corporations, incentives and requirements for banks and corporations to invest in socially desirable projects and policies.

DSOC's advocacy of public ownership is neither doctrinaire nor universal. One of its theorists, Erazim Kohak, had written in a DSOC leaflet, "State ownership of factories is no more socialist than capitalist ownership. . . . The basic socialist principle is democracy—the state belongs to its citizens, the factories belong to their workers." The convention, recognizing that the structures of industrial democracy need to be more clearly defined, voted to set up a special committee of members and "sympathetic experts" to do so and to propose legislation that could move the country more quickly toward this goal.

One of the regular features of DSOC get-togethers is a meeting of "the religious caucus," henceforth to be known as the DSOC Committee on Religion and Socialism. (Henceforth also to be a little better organized and circulating some literature of its own, thanks to a Jewish member, Harlan Baker.) Garrett Evangelical Seminary at Evanston sent several representatives, notably Rosemary Ruether, the Catholic theologian, and James Will. One of the leaders was Jim Gorman, a Church of Christ pastor from Chicago who has written, "Atheistic humanism does not have the symbolic resources to confront the pollution of religious symbols (by capitalism). This must be done by the bearers of the Word, the stories, the dreams that give the lie to the golden calf."

There was a good representation of Catholic socialists, including several priests and nuns, but in some ways the most intriguing member was a man sitting next to me, a non-DSOC visitor, who said, "I have trouble understanding what religion has to do with economics. I recently spent a month with a Tibetan monk, a beautiful, spiritual man, and we didn't discuss economics once." One might have quoted St. Thomas, "A sufficiency of this world's goods is necessary for the good life." One might have quoted Jesus, "I was hungry and you gave me not to eat. . . . Depart, you cursed." Or one might have gone back to Isaiah, "This, rather, is the fasting that I wish: releasing those bound unjustly, untying the thongs of the yoke, setting free the oppressed and the homeless, clothing the naked. . . . Then shall your light break forth like the dawn."

Unfortunately, there wasn't time. We were too busy organizing ourselves, so that there might be other times in the future, so that we might take advantage of what everyone acknowledged was a new and growing interest in socialism on the part of religious Americans.

DSOC is still a painfully small organization, but for a small and young organization it has done some useful things. As Jack Clark, the intense, dedicated young secretary, reminded us, its Democracy '76 project mobilized an impressive spectrum of political, intellectual, feminist and trade union leaders behind a progressive program for change that had an important effect on the Democratic platform. It has made some distinguished converts, among the more recent being Walter Dean Burnham, Harvey Cox, James Farmer, Gloria Steinem and Lester Thurow. The question now is, can it convert the rank-and-file?

What impressed me at Chicago was the high level of intelligence, civility and humor. Much of the credit for this must go to the chairman, Mike Harrington. Even a capitalist organ like *Business Week* has called him "a good and honest man." He is not a religious man, but I couldn't help thinking as I watched him that his personal style is remarkably Christian.

JOHN C. CORT

(John C. Cort, formerly one of the editors of Commonweal, *is now working on a book about Christian Socialism.)*

DOM JULIAN STEAD

DECEMBER NIGHT

In the silence of the sea
a new moon was the lamb of God
that takes away the darkness of the world.
It was the most high
where, like polished slate, the smooth and silent water
nursed its gulls till dawn.

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NEW CHANCE FOR THE BISHOPS

PETER STEINFELS

EUROPEAN historians have often referred to the aborted revolutions of 1848 as the turning point when European history failed to turn. Historians of the Catholic Church in America may be able to look on 1977 the same way.

Several years ago the American bishops made a crucial decision. Instead of simply issuing a Bicentennial statement drawn up in the bishops' offices, they would initiate a process of consultation and collaboration at all levels of the Church. A series of regional hearings was organized; panels of bishops heard testimony from invited experts on particular themes and from local spokespersons on the special concerns of the Church in that area. Parish discussions were organized in at least half the nation's dioceses; "feedback sheets" produced 800,000 comments and proposals. Working groups shaped the testimony from the hearings and the reactions from parishes into eight documents. These were brought before the 1,340 delegates to the Detroit "Call to Action" last October. Working first in groups of about 165, then in committees of 30 to 40, and then in small groups of 10 or so, the delegates revised the statements; and, reassembling at each level up to the full conference, voted the new documents up or down.

The product of these deliberations has many faults. Chief among them is sheer bulk. Detroit gave us too many recommendations, many of them repetitious, the totality lacking in emphasis and careful rationale. But the real product of the Bicentennial consultation was the process itself, the most extensive effort of its kind held in the American Church.

There is a very real chance, however, that this process will be rejected.

Because many of the Detroit recommendations were mildly liberal and a very few, at least in the view of most bishops, were downright radical, the American bishops are being tempted to treat Detroit mainly as a challenge to their own authority. At their May meeting in Chicago, they may be led to dismiss Detroit, either by hard words or soft ones, in favor of a reassertion of episcopal prerogative.

A good number of bishops are afraid that with the Bicentennial consultation they went for a ride on a tiger. They want to dismount. There is a large element of truth in their perception; but the tiger they are astride is not the "Call to Action" but America itself.

This point was made explicitly and implicitly, time and again, by participants at a meeting held several weeks ago in California. Jointly sponsored by Holy Names College of Oakland and Prospective International, a Belgian Catholic organization, the meeting examined the special American experience of Catholicism. Whether in the remarks of scholars like David O'Brien, John Coleman and Richard McBrien, or in the comments of the bishops, clergy and lay activists present, the theme that stood out was the democratic, voluntaristic character of American culture and religion, and the need for the Church to evolve structures that fit it.

Perhaps it was only because the participants included far more "Church professionals" than lay people (and of course the disaffected or disaffiliated are never represented at such gatherings at all), but the meeting also displayed a serious concern for institutional forms that was in marked contrast to the naive anti-institutionalism of the late sixties. In facts like this the bishops should find cause for hope, not fear. The real threat to Catholic continuity comes not from the desire to change institutions but from indifference to them.

That is why the bishops would be letting an historic opportunity slip by if their May response to the Bicentennial consultation is essentially negative. Consider the objections made to the process culminating in the Detroit "Call to Action." First, *representativeness*: half the dioceses, and particularly large urban centers in the north and east, did not conduct grassroots discussions: at the same time, over ninety percent of the delegates in Detroit were either bishops or their appointees. Perhaps, then, the "ordinary" Catholic can complain that she was insufficiently represented; the bishops cannot. The ready solution is increased opportunity for "ordinary" Catholics to participate in the consultative process.

Second, *the undigested mass of proposals*: in a day and a half, the Detroit assembly approved over 200 recommendations, many of them making multiple points. Obviously there must be a better method of sorting—which can only be done by a standing body of a representative character. The problem with Detroit was that, absent any other broad-based, representative assembly except the 1,340 delegates themselves, the entire work of the Bicentennial consultation finally had to land in their laps for legitimation. It would also help, of course, if consultation like this occurred more often than every two centuries.

Third, *the unreflective atmosphere*: Andrew Greeley called Detroit a "Tent Show" (although he, like myself, wasn't there); its defenders have spoken of "evolution of consciousness" and pointed to the free nature of the debate and the careful attention to each amendment. It seems absolutely justified to insist that the dynamic of group deliberation, including its eloquence and enthusiasms, is essential to democracy. That is why we are ruled by parliaments and not

(Continued on page 222)

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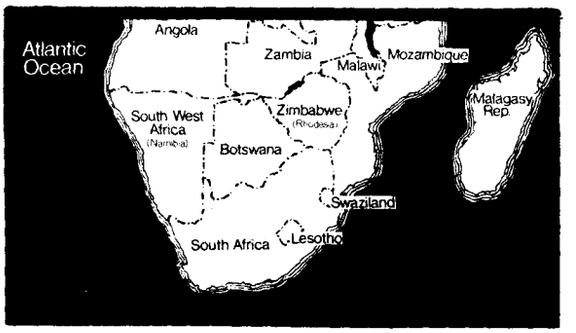
THE UNITED STATES & SOUTHERN AFRICA

PETER WALSHE



What is needed is a radical reassessment

Southern Africa has been in the headlines: the coup in Portugal followed by independence for Mozambique; civil war and Cubans in Angola; guerrillas and Kissinger in Rhodesia; the collapse of negotiations in Geneva; the ferocious repression of resurgent black protests in the Republic of South Africa. This regional ferment is not simply the result of racial discrimination and countervailing violence. It is not a situation that can be adequately analyzed in terms of dismantling color-bars and encouraging the equivalent of civil rights movements—a process with which most Americans would feel at ease. More awkward issues have to be addressed and they go to the heart of United States foreign policy.

Southern Africa, which has within it the seeds of a devastating human tragedy of international dimensions, also has the potential to focus issues of race *and* class exploitation as well as the economic, poiltical and cultural impact of transnational corporations. Moreover, this troubled area could focus these issues with a clarity which might not only lead to a reappraisal of Southern African policy, but to a re-examination of United States and third world relations in general. Without such a radical reassessment of foreign policy towards Africa, Asia and Latin America, the United States will remain one of the major obstacles to the elimination of hunger, malnutrition and political repression around the globe.

United States policy in Southern Africa has been a classic cold war strategy: a search for regional stability, support for anti-Communist governments and the maintenance of an arena for increasing corporate investment. On the one hand, South Africa's *apartheid* policies have been deplored in principle, South Africa's continuing administration of Namibia (South West Africa) recognized as illegal, Portugal's intransigence in attempting to hold onto Mozambique and Angola lamented, and Rhodesia's unilateral declaration of independence from Britain condemned. Yet, in each case the United States has drawn back from supporting the populist forces whenever they have espoused socialist economic orders in challenging the *status quo*. Powerful American corporations have also been involved with a rapid build-up of private investment in Angola and the core state, South Africa. In addition, massive United States economic assistance as well as stepped-up training of Portuguese pilots was offered the old fascist regime in Lisbon as it struggled to repress the guerrilla wars that broke out in Africa during the early 1960s. In the case of Rhodesia, the United States continues to violate the United Nations economic boycott in its purchase of chrome under the Byrd amendment. In Namibia American firms still enjoy tax exemptions for revenue paid to the illegal South African administration.

These cold war policies, linked to a strategy for third world growth which is based on the support of privileged economic elites allied to the technical expertise of the transnationals, cannot succeed in Southern Africa. Indeed they are collapsing with embarrassing completeness and rapidity in the aftermath of the Portuguese military coup of April 1974. The new left-leaning regime in Lisbon negotiated independence for Mozambique and Angola so that African forces with socialist commitments came to power in spite of the United States. On the east coast power was transferred to a unified movement—the Front for the Liberation of Mozambique. In Angola Portugal withdrew amidst a civil war sponsored in part by United States intervention on behalf of ethnically based groups that appeared

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less socialist in orientation. The USSR, China and South Africa have also fished in troubled waters. When South Africa invaded to support the factions favored by America, Cuban troops with Soviet logistical backing arrived as a countervailing force and assisted the Popular Movement for the Liberation of Angola to establish its ascendancy.

These changes immediately escalated guerrilla activities against Rhodesia (Zimbabwe) where the Smith regime was having to extend the white draft and attract mercenaries from abroad. As the country's internal security situation deteriorated, Kissinger attempted a patch-up job designed to thwart the emerging preeminence of African nationalist groups with strong socialist commitments. Although it was presented as a new policy, this belated response to the festering Southern African scene did not involve the radical reassessment of foreign policy that is required if the United States is to assist the oppressed. Rather it was a recognition of changed circumstances and an attempt to usher in a change from white control to black "moderate" government. This meant a black regime prepared to cooperate with the West and the established instruments of our economic power, the transnational corporations already ensconsced in Southern Africa.

Of course, the scene has been complicated by the division within the nationalist movement, a situation perpetuated by government repression which precluded the growth of well-organized black political organizations within the country. In essence, however, the Geneva Conference which the Kissinger initiative produced, has failed for two reasons—the intransigence of the Smith regime, and the determination of the United States and Britain to exclude the guerrilla forces from a decisive say in Zimbabwe's future. It is in this context that the level of violence will rapidly increase, and not all of it will be tactically controlled. An example of such randomness may have been the recent shooting of seven missionaries. This is a perplexing event as the Zimbabwe Peoples Army operating out of Mozambique has been meticulous up to this point in avoiding the missions, a policy of restraint pursued in part because of the courageous stance of Bishop Donal Lamont of Umtali, now facing ten-years imprisonment for refusing to report the presence of guerrillas.

Although these events appeared in the headlines, they were essentially maneuvers in buffer areas around the core state of the region, the Republic of South Africa. South Africa has its own complex history of black and white interaction, an industrial revolution sparked by the discovery of diamonds and gold in the late 19th century, the rise of white Afrikaner nationalism and the reassertion of deeply rooted patterns of segregation under the more recently coined term *apartheid*. In essence, white financial power (controlled at first by Britain and English-speaking South Africans) and white political power (controlled by Afrikaners of Dutch and German descent) have used black labor to develop a rapidly urbanizing economy. At the same time that labor has been denied civil rights in the economy it was creating. This systematic racial discrimination has been built around a legal fiction that black laborers are migratory, that is temporary sojourners, in that 87 percent of South Africa which is reserved by law for white property rights and white political power. The vast majority of South Africans are therefore impersonally used as labor units and told to focus their political aspirations on their "homelands" or Bantustans where they do not work and live—the decaying overpopulated agricultural backwaters comprising 13 percent of South Africa's land mass. The Transkei was the first of these backwaters to be offered political independence. Although this occurred in October 1976, the territory has yet to obtain diplomatic recognition and its statehood should be ignored as a shallow maneuver to entrench white supremacy over the wealth of South Africa.

Apartheid is therefore an efficient means for the exploitation of man by man, and the recent black uprisings give a glimpse of the suppressed tensions arising from systematic injustice. Racial discrimination in the core state has been used to reinforce class exploitation with United States corporations increasingly a major part of the system. Indeed, the investment and technical expertise of these corporations have been crucial in building up mining, atomic power, chemical, vehicle and electronics industries. These industries have bolstered white power, functioning in part as the economic base for the South African military, police and surveillance systems.

Opposition to racial and economic exploitation has existed in South Africa throughout the 20th century. Africans passed resolutions, dispatched delegations, petitions and moral appeals for almost half a century before turning to passive resistance in the 1950s. Their organizations, the African National Congress and Pan Africanist Congress, were then banned in 1960 and forced underground. In the years following this repression, the United States offered verbal condemnation of *apartheid* while the build-up of corporate investment increased sharply. Simultaneously the liberation movements were neglected.

After sixteen years of rumbling discontent and draconian repression, black student protests erupted again in late 1976 and have spread to the major South African cities. For a brief moment, three-quarters of Johannesburg's black workers withheld their labor in solidarity with the young leaders of the black consciousness movement. These protests have been ruthlessly crushed. Over five hundred demonstrators have been shot, thousands arrested, hundreds held without trial and new legislation rushed through the white parliament to entrench still further the race and class privilege of *apartheid*.

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Prime Minister Vorster and leading members of the South African cabinet have rededicated themselves to maintaining the system. Thank God the Christian Institute, the Catholic bishops and the South African Council of Churches have thought otherwise. Building on past statements condemning *apartheid,* they have now called for full black political participation, an end to racial discrimination, and a radical redistribution of resources. In practice the Catholic hierarchy has now defied the regime by integrating their schools and encouraging passive resistance to the draft.

Southern Africa, as an international trouble spot, is therefore a depressing area involving a series of failures and potential disasters for the United States. In the long run the cold war formula will not work, either in the support for "stable" white regimes or black counterparts rooted in comparable class privilege. Are there alternative directions? There are, but they require a radical reassessment of Southern African trends as well as trends throughout the third world. They also involve a willingness to accept a pluralistic world order in which American political and economic institutions are not the norm.

The Carter Administration

So far the Carter administration shows few signs of recognizing the full dimensions of the shift that is needed. Ambassador Andrew Young is committed to bringing Smith back to the negotiating table via South African pressure, ready to veto attempts to expel South Africa from the United Nations, and prepared, if necessary, for a United States veto of economic sanctions against the *apartheid* regime. Rather the Ambassador believes South Africa can be pressured into change by American corporations. Alas, the evidence is in. United States investment in South Africa escalated following effective political repression after Sharpville in 1960, and slowed as recent protests developed. Profits are what matter and these corporations are deeply entrenched in the profit-producing system of *apartheid.* Moreover, they have shown determined resistance to the efforts of American churches to prise them loose.

In accepting such a package of warmed-up 1960s policy, Ambassador Young is very close to betraying the Biblical faith and prophetic search for justice with which he has been associated in the past. It could be that he is using the United States civil rights struggle as a paradigm for Southern Africa. The draconian repression of recent protests by the Vorster government should have been yet another reminder of the total inappropriateness of this model. South Africa of the 1970s has not the same ambience as the United States of the 1960s.

To become the hope of the poor and oppressed, America must shift its support from entrenched and increasingly ruthless elites. This will be peculiarly difficult as it involves encouraging populist national movements with socialist ideologies and, given past history, anti-American predilections. These movements are nevertheless essentially nationalist with egalitarian hopes. While concerned to limit the privileges of local elites and transnational corporations, they are not the handmaidens of Moscow or China anymore than they choose to be the blind devotees of Paris, London, or Washington. An alternative to present policies is to stop identifying populist and socialist movements with a Communist conspiracy (even if the Communist powers do fish in troubled waters), and to recognize these movements as the local struggle for economic and political justice. At the same time our transnational corporations will have to be disciplined, that is brought effectively under the constraints of public policy and prised loose from alliances with foreign elites. As pools of skilled administrators, research teams and innovators, these corporations could still assist third world countries—whether socialist or otherwise—but on a contractual basis rather than by direct investment and controlling interests. Just as the United States trades with the USSR and China, so economic co-operation with third world areas could continue to evolve—but not through the politically manipulative conduit of transnational corporations. In this way a new flexibility would enter our foreign policy options and America might then avoid recurrent failures in Southern Africa, and elsewhere, as resistance mounts to racial and class exploitation.

The world is more complex and potentially decentralized than Moscow, Washington, the Chase Manhattan or General Motors would have us believe. Egalitarian movements struggling to redistribute resources and to establish participatory democracies may be repressed as technically equipped dictatorships proliferate; but this is not inevitable, and the latent radical hope in America's past should be revivified to work against that dictatorial future. To accept this challenge and work effectively against privilege, Americans must recognize that their economic history is not for export. Capitalist modes of growth cannot be transplated to third world areas without producing grotesque injustices. Uncontrolled transnational corporations are not the cutting edge of salvation history.

If we recognize injustice, abandon the conspiracy theory of populist revolution, and realize that there is a worldwide problem of controlling the transnational corporations, then the way will have been opened to an alternative foreign policy in which radical socialist movements in the third world would not have to gravitate to the Soviet or Chinese blocs. National economic orders could be encouraged or set their own priorities, we would have to limit our material greed, but America could become a major source of democratic inspiration.

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AN OPEN LETTER TO THE APOSTOLIC DELEGATE

Most Reverend Jean Jadot, D.D.
Apostolic Delegate
3339 Massachusetts Ave., N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20008

Your Excellency: Christ's Peace!

We, the undersigned theologians of the Pontifical Faculty of the Jesuit School of Theology at Berkeley, address this letter to you as the representative of the Holy Father to the American Church.

We wish to discuss the recent Declaration of the Sacred Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith regarding the ordination of women to priesthood which asserts: "The Church, in fidelity to the example of the Lord, does not consider herself authorized to admit women to priestly ordination." We are not attempting here an extended investigation of the entire question of women's ordination, nor is it our purpose here to present a comprehensive argument that women should be admitted to the ministerial priesthood. Rather it is our judgment that the conclusion of the Declaration is not sustained by the evidence and the arguments alleged in its support, and that it could sanction within the Church a practice of serious injustice. It is for this reason that we send to you an expression of dissent and of appeal.

An important pre-note: The whole purpose of our writing will be vitiated beyond repair if the nature of our dissent is misunderstood. Public disagreement and frankness of response can often be taken in other cultures or read by unfriendly eyes as schism or as insult or as disobedience to lawful authority.

Precisely the opposite is the case. We dissent not because we disassociate ourselves in any way from the Catholic Church or from the Roman Pontiff, but because we feel ourselves very much united with both. Dissent in our culture is the protest of those who belong. It is the loyal opposition of those who feel that their very identification is leading them into a situation in which they seem to acquiesce in what is evil.

For theologians, dissent is neither a luxury nor a rhetoric. There are times when those whose lives are consecrated to the assimilation and explanation of the Word of God, cannot remain silent when that Word is attenuated seriously by indifference or by error or by insensitivity or by ignorance. The question then becomes one of conscience. Dissent becomes a moral imperative, and at this moment of morality there are no spectators. Not to act is its own modality of entrance into the deed —as emphatically as is approval or prosecution.

The Dissent: It is with this understanding that we ask Your Excellency to convey to the Holy Father and to the Doctrinal Congregation our disappointment and disagreement with the determination of this Congregation regarding the ordination of women. It is simply not evident to us that fidelity to the example of Jesus, who incorporated the human race into a unity within himself, would demand that women be excluded because of their sex from the sacramental and governing functions within the Church forever and on principle.

If the Doctrinal Congregation had confined its discussion to the present opportuneness of the ordination of women to the priesthood, alleging the practice of the Oriental Church; the position of women in different cultures, the contemporary attacks on the Holy See from the far right, it would have issued a declaration whose reasonableness would not have been legitimately questioned, although its conclusions might well have been. There is a sanity about allowing for cultural growth, and the Church must both lead and proceed in terms of the development of consciousness throughout the entire world.

But the thrust of the Declaration is not in terms of organic and historical developments, but in terms of dogmatic impossibility. The foundations of its arguments are laid in Sacred Scripture, the Fathers of the Church, the unaltered tradition of the past two thousand years, and the nature of the sacramental sign. It is our judgment that none of these, either individually or collectively, can bear the weight assigned. The limits of a letter do not allow us to present our extended investigations of the use of each of these *loci theologici*. Here we simply summarize the conclusions of our work.

1. The scriptural evidence does not allow for any settlement of the question once and for all on the possible accession of women to the presbyterate. This was the judgment of the Pontifical Biblical Commission and one with which we agree. The Declaration fails to acknowledge that it is disagreeing with the Pontifical Biblical Commission and to provide adequate grounds for so doing. What is more, the Declaration sometimes uses biblical data with a questionable exegetical method-

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ology and with presuppositions that allow the contextual meaning of certain passages to be compromised.

2. Of the initial five patristic authorities cited, only one (Epiphanius) clearly and directly supports the prohibition of women's ordination, while one other (Tertullian) offers a basis for argument that this should be the case; but no one would admit the truth of the basis for his argument today. The other three citations are basically irrelevant. Of the second series of patristic authorities alleged, only one (*Constitutiones Apostolicae*) offers *some* support for the statement for which it is cited. The others do not.

If the most important and persuasive patristic passages have been referred to by the Declaration, then the patristic argument is too weak to be of any importance. We are certainly not confronted with the "unanimous consent of the Fathers" which is generally required for the establishment of a theological position.

3. The notion of tradition used in the Declaration is that of the inflexible transmission of past practices, regardless of the cultures out of which they came and the needs to which they responded. Both the development of doctrine and the vitality of any tradition indicate that what is "handed on" must be translated into the contemporary idiom and respond to the discerned presence of the Spirit of Christ, bringing the evolving Church into a closer fidelity to the Gospel. To say that we have never ordained women in the past and therefore, cannot do so now, is to ignore the fact that the issue has never arisen in precisely these contemporary terms and within the new realization of women's place in the world.

4. The sacramental sign necessary to act *in persona Christi* is to be located within the human person rather than within masculine or feminine sexuality. There is a legitimate concern of the Declaration that "the image of Christ" be perceived by the faithful in the priest. We do not see how women's ordination would derogate from this. On the contrary, the presence of women as priests, as well as men, could be an abiding sign to the faithful that all Christians "have put on Christ Jesus" and in this identification lies their hope for salvation. It is simply a matter of fact that the exclusion of women from priestly ordination in our day does not reinforce "the image of Christ" for a growing number of people, but rather symbolizes sexual discrimination within the Church.

The Declaration correctly maintains that no single person can lay claim to ordination as a personal right. The profound issue of justice does not arise because one woman has been denied presbyteral orders. The issue of justice is engaged when an entire class of Catholics is antecedently excluded on principle even from the possibility that Christ might call them to this ministry, so that simply because they are women it is impossible to admit them to this service of word and of sacrament. The exclusion of any group of Christians from a life or from a function to which they feel a call is so serious an action by the Church, it should be supported as an obvious demand of the Gospel. Any evidence should be overwhelming which makes discrimination an imperative. This Declaration does not contain such evidence.

The Declaration offers neither encouragement nor leadership to the growing movement for the rightful evolution of women within the Church. The emerging consciousness of women's rights is a major moral development of our times, and one which the Declaration positively acknowledged. Despite this recognition, however, the Declaration retards that movement and commits the people of God to abiding and exclusive government by men. In its decision, the Roman Congregation may well be repeating in its own form and through its insufficient sensitivity to the issues involved, such condemnations as those of the Chinese Rites, of the Copernican understanding of the solar system, and of the early emerging biblical movement at the turn of the century.

This is the reason that we write to you, Your Excellency. Roman Congregations have made serious mistakes in the past whose harm to the Church we continue to experience centuries afterwards. We believe that we may well be on a similar path again, and the effect of aligning priesthood with masculinity may identify the Church as regressive for millions of human beings in the future. It is our conviction that this Declaration, because of the faulty nature of its argumentation and

FELIX STEFANILE

DAWN

Dawn:
the Word saying itself
once more,
like a sign on an awning.
I stand by my window
as by an easel,
and the hours shape themselves—
somebody's pipe,
a scampering squirrel,
clouds
as white as laundry on a line,
and the sparrows
starting to live it up,
to evening, I think.
I'll make it, make it, maybe,
put it in
a poem.

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conclusions, could impose a grave injustice on Catholic women and undermine the position of the Successor of Peter within the United States, continuing what has become a serious dissipation of his authority.

The Appeal which we make to Your Excellency is really threefold:

1. That the concerns and judgments of the members of this Pontifical Faculty of Theology be communicated to the Holy Father and to the Doctrinal Congregation.

2. That in the future, any document which is to bear so directly upon the lives and self-understanding of so many members of the Church be submitted as a matter of policy to the Bishops, theological faculties throughout the world, and to appropriate representative bodies of those seriously affected. Only after this widespread consultation should something so serious be given authoritative sanction by one of the Roman Congregations.

3. The Declaration left open the ordination of women to the diaconate and we ask that it be instituted now as soon as possible, giving sacramental and public sanction for ministries which many women have been authorized to perform already within the Church and which they are performing so successfully. We believe that expanding the Church's experience here would illuminate successfully the evolving discernment about the Church's decisions and actions in the future.

We recognize that these three measures will not end the discussion of women's ordination to the priesthood, but they will allow it to continue organically and gracefully within the developing self-understanding of the Church. The growing discernment and incorporation of the Spirit of Christ into our structures, is all that we finally hope for through this letter.

In sending this as an "Open Letter," Your Excellency, we follow a practice of general discussion which is as old as our nation. The Declaration itself is a public document. The letters of praise which it has elicited from many bishops and Catholic groups have been printed in *Osservatore Romano*, in diocesan newspapers, and in the secular press. These letters with their comments indicate two things: (1) that evalation is not out of order, and (2) that this evaluation is public. Once such a scene has been set, it would denigrate the Church to pretend in public that there is no serious contrary opinion or to deny this dissent the public voice granted to the alternative evaluation.

Secondly, we make our reflections public to support in their pain those who have read in this Declaration a decision that women will always occupy a secondary role within the Church. There is no question that some have taken serious scandal from this Declaration, that so decisive a document could be issued whose consultation was so minimal and whose argumentation appears so weak. Perhaps this letter can give hope to some who feel here a deep injustice, indicating that one can disagree without either leaving the Church or without a destructive bitterness and mutual recrimination.

Finally, then, please understand the profound love for the Church and for the Vicar of Christ that has led to this dissent and to its open expression. It was a woman—Beatrice, Dante's symbol for theology—who put so well the spirit in which we write: "Amor mi mosse, che mi fa parlare." (Inf. ii.72) It is love which has brought us to speak. Sincerely yours in Christ,

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TRANSFORMATION IN CAMBODIA

DAVID P. CHANDLER

The most radically altered country in the world

"Two thousand years of Cambodian history have virtually ended."
—Phnom Penh Radio, January 1976

In a little less than two years, i.e., since the liberation of Phnom Penh and Battambang in April 1975, the former Buddhist kingdom of Cambodia, which had weathered two thousand years of recorded history, a century of French control, six years of American bombing and perhaps five centuries (c.800-1400) of grandeur, has transformed itself into what seems to be the most radically altered country in the world.

The transformation affects every aspect of Cambodian life. The country is no longer a kingdom, and Buddhism is no longer the state religion. The regime—which calls itself Democratic Kampuchea, but is known to most of its people as *angkar,* "the organization"—has moved millions of people out of towns and cities onto rural work-sites, in a process aimed at increasing agricultural production, fostering self-reliance, and destroying what it calls the "old society." Money is no longer used. Shops, schools and monasteries are closed. Transportation and property have been collectivized. There is no postal service. Western medicines are not prescribed, and the Cambodian language has been overhauled to root out foreign words. The population, officially a blend of "workers, peasants, and the revolutionary army," dresses in the black cotton pyjamas traditionally worn, at work, by poor Cambodian peasants. Gambling, drinking, polygamy and extramarital sex, are frowned upon, or worse; people who had called each other, in the past, "Sir", "Brother" and "Uncle"—to name only three Cambodian "pronouns"—must now address each other as "friend."

Political leadership has been collectivized, too, in contrast to the personalized rule of Prince Sihanouk (1941-1970) and the befuddled dictatorship of Field Marshal Lon Nol, whose Khmer Republic (1970-1975) was called (by Nixon) a "model of the Nixon Doctrine." The "old society," is seen as foreign, unequal, exploitative and corrupt. Its habits, hierarchies and economic relations have been swept aside.

What has taken their place? Is the revolution a "Cambodian" one? What are its roots, ideology, tactics and plans?

Nearly all the information we have comes from refugees or from officials of the regime. Cambodians who are happy with the revolution are inside Cambodia, but there is no way of hearing their opinions. Refugees, on the other hand, have by definition run away. Another problem with their testimony is that so many of them have escaped from northwestern Cambodia, where radical politics before liberation were weak, rural class differences especially pronounced, and agricultural production higher than elsewhere in the country. For these reasons, the liberating forces there seem to have been especially vengeful and undisciplined. Stories about harsh conditions and atrocities come largely from this part of the country. But information on this point is ambiguous. The lack of refugees from other regions could mean that conditions there are better than in the northwest, or merely that the Thai border is too far away to reach on foot. Other refugees have gone to Vietnam; Cambodian officials told a Swedish diplomat early in 1976 that these included the entire Vietnamese population of Cambodia—perhaps 150,000 people—but unlike refugees in Thailand, they are inaccessible to outsiders.

Peasants have been "outside history" for many years. Cambodian records compiled before the arrival of the French in 1863 were written by and for the literate elite, and must reflect their scale of values. This means that we know very little, in quantitative or political terms, about the mass of Cambodian society, many of whom, for most of their history, appear to have been slaves of one sort or another. The frequency of locally-led rebellions in the nineteenth century—against the Thai, the Vietnamese, the French and local officials—suggests that Cambodian peasants were not as peaceable as their own mythology, reinforced by the French, would lead us to believe. To understand their picture of the world, we should remember that for the first thousand years or so of the Christian era, Cambodians were heavily influenced by India, which gave them an alphabet, a court language, art-styles, two religions (Hinduism and Buddhism) and a fairly rigid, if often haphazard, sense of social hierarchies. In isolated villages—especially after the abandonment of Cambodia's great capital, at Angkor, in the fifteenth

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century—Cambodian peasant-slaves, harassed at will by people in authority, developed little sense of community or strength. The word for "to govern" an area was the same as the word "to consume." As in India, language and behavior were oriented toward differences in status. The hope of reincarnation in Buddhism was to improve one's place; conversely, power, however ruthlessly applied, was taken as proof of meritorious behavior—in another life.

Effect on the Peasants

How did this legacy affect peasants in the colonial era? The French were not drawn to this kind of question, preferring to reconstruct Cambodia's ancient temples, nurture a small elite, and modernize the economy to provide surpluses of rice and rubber. Scholars know little of what actually went on. Did old elites break down, persist, or reappear? What happened to rural attitudes towards authority and success? Did families grow more or less cohesive? What were the effects of monetization, schooling and printed books? I put these questions to show how shaky our knowledge of Cambodian rural history often is. The same is true of the early independence period (1953-1970), the so-called "Sihanouk years." The Prince himself occupies the foreground, obscuring such important things as Cambodia's population boom, poorly planned mass education, the "revolution of rising expectations" and the effects on daily life of the Vietnamese civil war. To understand why so many Cambodians chose revolution in the 1970s, we need to know more about patterns of land ownership, malnutrition and indebtedness in the 1950s and 1960s, as well as the growth of personal fortunes, and corruption, among the Phnom Penh elite; U.S. bombing patterns, after 1969; and the ideology of Cambodia's students, including those who went abroad.

The ideology of Democratic Kampuchea draws its strength and wording from Marxism, especially as acted out in China, without formally acknowledging the debt. Many leaders of the regime have Marxist pasts, some going back to the 1940s, when several thousand Cambodians—especially among those living in southern Vietnam—cast their lot with the Communist-led Viet Minh. After the Geneva Conference of 1954, when France withdrew from Indochina, an estimated 2,000 of these men and women chose to go to North Vietnam rather than live under Sihanouk or Ngo Dinh Diem. Leftists who stayed in Cambodia and formed a People's Party were ruthlessly suppressed by Sihanouk and his police. Others went underground, especially in the mountainous southwest. Meanwhile, in the 1950s and 1960s, a younger generation of Marxists, made up for the most part of Cambodians trained abroad or by French Marxists teaching in Cambodia, came of age and challenged Sihanouk's "Buddhist Socialist" regime. These "young intellectuals," or "Khmer Rouge," as Sihanouk called them, included many men who became leaders in Democratic Kampuchea—Khieu Samphan, Hu Nim, Son Sen and Ieng Sary, to name only four.

In the late 1960s, these two strands of Cambodian radicalism—old Viet Minh and young intellectuals—merged. At the height of the Vietnam war, many intellectuals fled to remote parts of the kingdom—including ones noted in the early 1950s for Viet Minh activity—to escape Sihanouk's police and to revolutionize their countrymen along Maoist lines. The northeastern parts of the kingdom, already a base and corridor for Vietnamese liberation forces, were liberated by the Cambodians fairly early, probably with Vietnamese help. By 1971—after Sihanouk had been toppled by a rightist *coup*—the Khmer Rouge occupied roughly two-thirds of Cambodia's territory, and controlled perhaps half its population. The youngest and poorest segments of society, it seems, responded enthusiastically to the revolution. Those who disliked it fled, if they could, to government zones, swelling the population of Phnom Penh to some three million people. Others were "re-educated," or killed. American bombing—one of Dr. Kissinger's "bargaining chips"—and the violence of the civil war forced everyone in the kingdom to take sides.

In 1973, after the Paris Agreements, Vietnamese influence over the Khmer Rouge diminished. This development reduced Prince Sihanouk's freedom to maneuver, as head of an ostensibly pro-Chinese government-in-exile, and allowed the Khmer Rouge to replace pro-Sihanouk cadres with their own people as they accelerated their experiments, on Cambodian soil, with Maoist ideas of revolution. So-called "co-operative farms" (*sakakar*) were introduced in 1973. Other features of life in liberated zones included all-night political and cultural rallies, called *miting*, after the English word, in both Cambodian and Vietnamese; systematic puritanism affecting dress, hair-styles and sexual behavior; the abolition of money, badges of rank and private property; and a stress on collective leadership, ownership and self-reliance. Foreign models were played down to make the revolution seem a Cambodian one without roots in the "old society." In some areas, the process of liberation went on for several years; in others, especially those liberated late in the war, it was violent and brief.

The first months of peace in Battambang, for example, were harsh. After years of propaganda from their leaders and pummeling from U.S. and Lon Nol aircraft, Khmer Rouge soldiers, filled with what one of them called "uncontrolled hatred" took apart a pair of T-28 aircraft with their bare hands, and "would have eaten them, if possible," according to a witness. At the same time, people who held authority under Lon Nol began to disappear for "study." A morbid jingle declared that "*Khmaer krohom somlap, min del prap*" ("the Khmer Rouge kill, but never explain"). By mid-summer, how-

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to the Occasional Reader:

THIS FIRST APRIL ISSUE provides a typical example of the timeliness and topicality that characterize *Commonweal* these days. And it follows directly a March issue that featured such articles as Stephen A. Garrett's "Morality at the Water's Edge"; Abigail McCarthy's "Timely Saints"; Salvatore Adamo on the plight of the Catholic press; Frank Getlein on the lavish book and television contracts obtained by "the failed Nixonians."

In this current issue, then, you will find the same depth and immediacy. For instance, Peter Steinfels on the need for democratization in the Church; Frank Getlein on Carter's moralism in foreign policy; David P. Chandler on the Cambodians' plight; the Jesuit theologians' Open Letter to the Apostolic Delegate on women in the priesthood; John Cort on the Democratic Socialist Organizing Committee meeting in Chicago, and Peter Walshe on repression in South Africa and American overseas corporations.

Informative as these two samples may be, you will be able to discover for yourself the full force and unique flavor of this lay-directed journal of opinion only by reading successive issues of *Commonweal* for several months. To make this possible for you at a minimum of inconvenience, we are offering you a chance to obtain a five-months trial subscription, 11 issues for only $4—over 350 pages of meaningful political, cultural and religious comment, at half the magazine's single-copy price.

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ever, the killings stopped, and the transformation of Cambodian rural society, in the northwest, began in earnest.

By this time, the people of Battambang and Phnom Penh—perhaps two and a half million of them—had been moved into the countryside by the revolutionary army, organized into work-teams and ordered to produce their own food. The work-teams were made up of groups of 10, 30, 100, 300 and 900 people, led at each level, except the lowest, by three workers placed in charge of "work" (the tasks at hand), "politics" (culture and morale) and "economics" (food and tools). This structure, modeled on a military one, proved to be an effective instrument of Khmer Rouge control. Hours were long and food was scarce, although the "organization" made a point of feeding work-teams better than they fed "unproductive" people.

What was revolutionary about the process, in Cambodian terms, was the value placed on manual labor almost as an end in itself. In the "old society" peasants placed a premium on individual freedom, and on leisure of an unsupervised kind. To make up for this they are now told that they own the land and factories where they work, and even the revolution itself. Collective self-reliance or autarky, as preached by the regime, contrasts sharply with what might be called the slave mentality that suffused pre-revolutionary Cambodia and made it so "peaceful" and "charming" to the elite and to most outsiders—for perhaps two thousand years. A refugee from Battambang recalls a Khmer Rouge making this point at a *miting* in dramatic terms. The speech went something like this:

> In the old days, the big people told us we had independence. What kind of independence was that? What had we built? Well, *they* built an independence monument. Where did they build it? In the capital. Who saw the thing? The big people's children. Did country people see it? No, they didn't; they saw only photos. The big people's children went in and out of Cambodia, going here and there, and then they came back, to control our kind of people. What do we do, now, in contrast to all this? We don't build monuments like that. Instead, by raising embankments and digging irrigation canals, the children of Cambodia build their own independence monuments, ones that they can see, and their children, too . . .

The theme of self-reliance is stressed in Cambodia's constitution, promulgated in January of last year, and derives in part from the dissertation that one of Cambodia's leaders, Khieu Samphan, wrote in France in 1959. The phrase is sometimes known as autarky, and Khieu Samphan used this word in his address to the Conference of Non-Aligned Nations held in Colombo last year. In cultural and economic terms, the word has been attacked by T. S. Eliot, used by Stalin, and defended by Mussolini. In the Cambodian case, in 1976, autarky makes sense, both in terms of recent experience —American intervention, and what is seen as the Western-induced corruption of previous regimes—and in terms of Cambodia's long history of conflict with Vietnam. Cambodians are urged daily by their radio, and four times in the constitution, to "build and defend" their country against unspecified enemies. What was wrong with the "old society," these broadcasts suggest, was exploitation (literally, in Cambodian, "riding and stomping") and outsiders. Words that suggest foreign influence—such as "Communist," "socialist" or "Marxist," to name only three—do not appear in the constitution; French words are no longer used in Cambodian conversation; and the constitution condemns "so-called humanitarian" aid. Autarky is the keynote of Cambodia's ideology today, and certainly explains changing "Cambodia," in English ("Cambodge" in French) to "Kampuchea," reflecting local pronunciation, as if Argentina had changed the "g" in its name to an "h."

Self-reliance also explains turning away from Cambodia's past to make a society where there are "no rich and no poor, no exploiters and no exploited," and where, in the words of the constitution, people are free to "have no religious beliefs." Instead, everyone is at work, "happily" building dams, canals and embankments to provide water for two or even three rice crops a year—an achievement unequaled since the days of Angkor. Can the regime recapture the grandeur of Angkor without duplicating the slavery (and by implication, the elite) that made Angkor what it was? Is the price for liberation, in human terms, too high? Surely, as a friend of mine has written, we Americans with our squalid record in Cambodia should be "cautiously optimistic" about the new regime, "or else shut up." At the same time, I might feel less cautious and more optimistic if I were able to hear the voices of people I knew in the Cambodian countryside fourteen years ago, telling me about the revolution in their own words.

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MARK IRWIN

FROG'S ADVICE TO A YOUNG GIRL IN LOVE

Dressed in July's thick night air,
she walks toward
the pond's open mouth;
a medley of bow-strung rapture.

Timidly she approaches
and lowers one bare foot
to the water's glassy surface.
She watches and listens.

Ricocheting, their song stitches
the nether light of stars
in a delicate fiction;
the dialogue of young girls and princes.

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WHAT I READ

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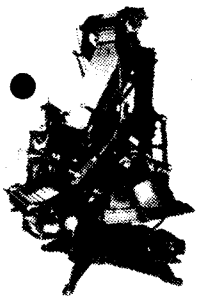

I'm a slow reader by choice, conviction and temperament. In college I attended the first few classes of a speed-reading course of the sort which allegedly enabled President Kennedy to read *Gone With the Wind* over breakfast but I hated the sensation of running my eye down the page and scooping up the words line by line. I had the constant feeling I was missing or overlooking something. Picked up on the fly the language seemed stale, like beer gone flat. I got the drift but not much of the detail. After a week or two of classes I reflected that no one was ever going to pile my desk with two feet of briefing papers every morning. I could take my time if I chose. So I dropped the speed-reading course and forever lost my chance of truly keeping up.

There is just too much to read. Without even mentioning books there are the general magazines, the special interest magazines, two newspapers a day, newsletters, small political magazines, the literary quarterlies, the financial press, articles on pressing subjects in *Foreign Affairs,* Jack Anderson, slick paper magazines for smokers of controlled substances, picture captions in *National Geographic,* articles by friends on solar energy and politics in Telluride, Colorado, articles about magazines in magazines about magazines, the business, travel and real estate sections of the Sunday *Times,* articles on pressing subjects in *Ms.,* the newsweeklies, even *People*. . . .

At least 94 percent of the people in *People* have got highly-paid press agents trying to get them in, which takes the urgency out of it somehow, but occasionally there are pictures of someone like Joan Didion. I would go a lot farther than *People* for anything about Joan Didion so I can't even cross off *People.* There is no end to it. Keeping up is a full-time job and with the best will in the world, honest, I still fall behind.

But there are some things so entertaining or useful I pick them up with a light heart. Some are well-known, some not. Herewith a list, in the event somebody out there doesn't already have enough to read:

Co-Evolution Quarterly is one of the great experiments in magazine publishing. It's a kind of son of *Whole Earth Catalog* with the addition of articles unique for their obsessive comprehension. Even the *New Yorker* is shortwinded by comparison. Stewart Brand thinks 20,000 words on space colonies is not a word too many. If you're not interested in space col-

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onies, you might be in acupuncture, the science of watersheds, composting, the mental life of whales, wind power, or what's left of the new left. When you find something you like you can be sure you never would have found it anywhere else. All this and catalog updates too. If *Co-Evolution Quarterly* goes under there is no hope for Western Civilization. You can do your part by subscribing. Eight well-spent dollars a year from CQ, Box 428, Sausalito, Calif. 94965.

Alan Abelson's column on the stock market which opens every issue of *Barron's,* a financial weekly. Abelson is about as disenchanted as it's possible for a man to be. I'm not sure if bears are born or made, but Abelson is a bear of the deepest hue, convinced that the law of gravity operates with especial force in the stock market. He has an eye like Mencken's for the greed and gaudy euphoria which sends stocks up, and is always standing well to one side when they come down. His remarks on politics are uniformly skeptical and amused.

The *Bulletin of Atomic Scientists.* There is a clock in the upper left-hand corner of the front cover with the hands currently standing at nine minutes to midnight. That's how close they think we are. Keep an eye on the clock. For the rest it's often useful, but as my friend Tim Ferris says, why can't the *Bulletin* be as good-looking as *International Defense Review?*

Feature articles in the *Wall Street Journal.* There are three in each issue, starting right, left and center of the front page. They're always in the same place so it's easy to check if there's something you're interested in while waiting in line to pay for the *Times.* The *Journal*'s headline writers are geniuses at their craft, which is as demanding a genre as the haiku. The headlines alone will enrich your day.

The short reviews in the back of *Foreign Affairs.* I can't say for sure that I've ever read every word in an article in *Foreign Affairs,* but the reviews are a model of brevity and compression. New books are categorized by subject—The United States; Western Europe; Military, Technical and Scientific, and so on. Trade books, scholarly works from the university presses, special reports and even some foreign books are covered. This is a good way to keep track of things.

Book reviews in general present something of a problem. For one thing, the major reviewers all tend to cover the same big books and neglect the rest. A way around this is to read *Publisher's Weekly* (by subscription only, a sobering $30 a year from R.R. Bowker Co., 117 Church Street, Whitinsville, Mass. 01588). It tells you the latest wrinkle in copyright law and the figures in big paperback contracts, in addition to reviewing 50 or 60 books a week in short, one-paragraph takes. Their idea is to let you know first of all what's in a book, with only a word or two, generally, about what it amounts to.

I'd like to make special mention here of two regular reviewers who have mastered their calling, Peter Prescott in *Newsweek* and Anatole Broyard in the daily *Times.* Both can write an article in 800 words, which is a feat, and both have pronounced tastes. They like things and they hate things and they always know why. Broyard is especially bracing on fiction which is pretentious, inflated or plain silly. He is never mellow with misguided sympathy for the author. I am sure, in fact, that some of his targets have not been able to eat or leave the house for days. If they survive there will be something of steel in them forever after.

Walt Disney's Comics & Stories and *Uncle Scrooge.* I'm not kidding. Doubtless it's an acquired taste but these are very funny publications. My personal favorite is "How the Town of Omelet Got Its Name," which opens with Donald and his nephews at the city limits after the event, disguised in dark glasses and big bushy beards. If that doesn't strike you as funny right there you probably won't like WDC & S or *Uncle Scrooge,* but if it does you'll be happy to know that both comics are republishing the old stories.

Some years ago a new team of writers and artists took over to put out *Donald Duck, Daisy Duck,* the *Beagle Boys* and *Huey, Dewey and Louie.* There isn't space here to explain in full why these are no good. The art work is bland and the stories are worse. They just aren't funny. The old team had a brilliant instinct for exaggeration with a straight face. Uncle Scrooge's ball of string leaps to mind. It was the size of a small weather balloon and a minor factor in Scrooge's fortune of umpteen squintillion, sixteen impossibijillion dollars, but a time came when it was critical. A rich miner from South Africa challenged Scrooge for the title of World's Richest Duck and amazingly matched him penny for penny. The last step was to unravel their respective balls of string to see who was the winner. So they set out on a straight line through darkest Africa. The new team cannot begin to match this sort of thing so stick to WDC & S and *Uncle Scrooge.* At a quarter they're a bargain, especially since the originals now sell for $5

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and up. Unfortunately you can no longer get them by subscription.

Also very funny is "The Lower Case" on the inside back cover of *Columbia Journalism Review*. This consists mostly of headlines which have slipped out of control—"Self-Abuse is No. 1 Killer," "Bill Would Permit Ads on Eyeglasses," "Marital Duties to Replace Borough Affairs for Harold Zipkin," "Police Kill Man with Axe" and the like. A whole page of these builds up to hysterical intensity.

The *Fieldstaff Reports* of the American Universities Field Staff consist of 10- to 20-page studies of things like the coup in Chile, cultural change in Afghanistan, the condition of the fellahin in Egypt, "Postwar Thailand: Indo-chinese Domino or Chinese Checker?" The authors know what they're talking about and the reports quickly build up into a compact library of background papers. I won't say I read them all, but they're filled with things which never get into the newspapers and they don't date as quickly as most of the periodicals one reads. Recently I picked up one from August, 1973, with a 15-page interview with the Venezuelan Communist leader Teodoro Petkoff, who explained why the party had abandoned the armed struggle. Among other things I learned that in 1965 or 1966 Ché Guevara seriously proposed that he come to Venezuela and lead the revolution. The Venezuelans were not enchanted. You can get the *Reports* from AUFS Inc., 4 West Wheelock Street, Hanover, N.H. 03755.

The ads in *Smithsonian* and *Natural History*. There are plenty of interesting articles in those magazines, too, but the ads are unique. They reveal a passionate hunger across America for things which are intrinsically valuable or fine of their kind. Things like silver, gold or even platinum medallions of the Founding Fathers, the 100 Greatest Moments in American History or Royal Flags of the World. One recent four-page, full-color ad in *Smithsonian* offered leather-bound editions of the 100 greatest books ever written for $28.50 each from the Easton Press in Norwalk, Conn. That's $2,850 for a couple of yards of books, and they don't tell you which books. Business in this line has fallen off a bit since the Bicentennial market cooled, but it's still brisk.

The people who buy those things all ought to subscribe to *Fine Woodworking*. I cannot speak too highly of this magazine, now in its second year. You may think the creative juices have dried up in America but if you do you're wrong. *Fine Woodworking*, like *Co-Evolution Quarterly*, is proof to the contrary. Half the magazine is devoted to practical advice, but it's a far cry from plans for kitchen cabinets and magazine racks. One recent article was devoted to the making of wooden planes, another to library steps. The other half of the magazine centers on questions of design.

There is something of a renaissance in woodworking going on in this country, although the woodworkers, like most other artists, are in the midst of a creative crisis. They have been trying new things for some time now but it is increasingly clear that, good as some of them are, they aren't as good as the old things. Philosophy, biography, naval tactics, the art of writing constitutions and cabinetry all flourished in the 18th century.

The most doubtful trend in woodworking now is toward freeform, sculpted pieces. A freeform table, for example, would be built up into a single unit by cutting out slabs of Philippines mahogany, say, with a bandsaw, piling them up with a gallon or two of hot glue between each slab, and then clamping them to create one single, solid, immovable block. After the glue hardens the unit is sculpted with a chainsaw, then sanded for seven weeks by a squad of gnomes, and finished. The result will look something like a toadstool from Alice-in-Wonderland, but flat on top. It will weigh 1,000 pounds and cost $2 a pound. The handrubbed finish will soak in so deeply the piece will glow in the dark. It'll take your breath away (especially if you try to move it), but it will also make you wonder who's making furniture for the people? Grand Rapids, that's who. The woodworkers' problem, of course, is where do you go after freeforms? I have confidence the folks who publish

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and read *Fine Woodworking* are going to work it out. Eight dollars a year from The Taunton Press, Box 355, Newtown, Conn. 06470.

With some temerity I invite your suggestions of publications I've overlooked. Keeping up is already a full day's work but I'd hate to miss anything. Besides, we've got it easy compared to the scientists. Not long ago a friend told me about his new job publishing abstracts of articles on electrical engineering. That's interesting; how many electrical engineering articles are published each year anyway? He answered: 85,000.

Eighty-five thousand!!! I think I staggered. That's nothing, he said. The annual production of articles on chemical engineering is now at 400,000 and still growing. To paraphrase *Ecclesiastes,* I guess it is: Of the making of magazine articles there is no end.

THOMAS POWERS

WELCOME TO HARD TIMES

THE SCREEN

The problem of assistant directors is almost as knotty as the problem of assistant professors. What to do with either of them, *that*'s the problem. Of course, in the movie business there is no such thing as tenure, so there's not so much harm done if you promote an assistant director. If his picture is no good or, worse still, he can't handle success, the powers that be in the movie business can always topple him back to the cutting room floor again. In academia, on the other hand, a promoted assistant professor becomes a power that be, and be and be and be to the last syllable of recorded time.

There is some consolation, I guess, in the fact that you don't stand to lose so much money by promoting an assistant professor as an assistant director. The entire life-time earnings of the former, including grant awards and fringe benefits, seldom come to a fraction of what will be chanced on the latter in a first, modest feature. But at the same time, making money in the movie business can't be given much more credence than losing it. Are we supposed to feel the system works, for instance, because it produces dubious success stories like Robert Wise? Wise was editor on *Citizen Kane* and Welles's assistant on *The Magnificent Ambersons*, for which he supposedly directed a few scenes. And from these humble origins came a career that was to be capped off directing *The Sound of Music*. No assistant professor has ever gone on to a more purely academic achievement than that.

Some assistant directors have had worthwhile directorial careers of their own. Tod Browning, from being assistant to D.W. Griffith on *Intolerance*, went on to make distinctive features in his own right. (He introduced Joan Crawford in *Tragedy of the Circus*, made the original version of *Dracula*, and did at least one truly classic film, *Freaks*.) But Browning is the most recent example I can think of. For the most part the good directors begin as writers, or even, like Welles, as actors, rather than as apprentices in direction itself. Federico Fellini, for example, got his start as a scriptwriter on Rosselini's *Open City* and went on to become one of cinema's great directors. Lina Wertmuller got her start as Fellini's assistant director on *La Strada*, and has gone on to become the Robert Wise of la dolce vita.

The difficulty is that the only directors who ever seem to have protégés are extremely powerful ones like Griffith, Welles, Fellini, or, now, Robert Altman. Altman's protégé is a young man named Alan Rudolph who was Altman's assistant on *The Long Goodbye*, *California Split* and *Nashville*, and who is now making his directorial debut with *Welcome to L.A.*, which Altman has produced. That difficulty I was just mentioning is that it's not easy to have a rich and influential mentor like Altman to help you with your career. Such a mentor is sometimes *so* influential, a preferred assistant may find himself wondering whether he'll be able to move out from under that influence. This is what Mr. Rudolph's first feature seems to leave him wondering at any rate.

For *Welcome to L.A.* is really very close—uncomfortably close—to Altman's *Nashville*. At least, I think Rudolph is pretty uncomfortable about it at times. In effect his film is the road show of *Nashville*, moving to L.A. that same pop music scene which *Nashville* exploited so successfully. Here the music is rock instead of country and western, but the setting of recording studios and overly impressive offices is the same. The personnel is pretty much the same too, with Keith Carradine, Geraldine Chaplin, Allan Nichols and Richard Baskin all reappearing from the earlier film (Baskin again in the dual role of on-screen performer and off-screen musical director). Even the characters are the same in Rudolph's film. The one that Ned Beatty played in *Nashville*—the executive who's cheating on his wife—is played here by Harvey Keitel. The wife, played by Lily Tomlin before and by Ms. Chaplin now, is again cheating on her husband as well. And the man with whom the wife does this cheating in both films is a pop singer played by Keith Carradine.

Yet it is not ultimately in some particular character or situation that Rudolph's film is most like Altman's, but rather in its manner of execution, its style. For neither film really has a plot. Each has only a series of coincidences, chance encounters and overlaps in the lives of more characters than any 100-minute plot could contain. To give Rudolph his due, he has learned

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Altman's technique well. If you sacrifice plot, then to hold on to your audience you have to give it some other way to get from one scene to the next. You have to play on some central action, or some view of the action, that recurs again and again with variations and glues all those fragments of scenes together. Altman did this in *Nashville* by turning the coincidences in his characters' lives into a chain-reaction wreck, an endless collision of both automobiles and personalities. Rudolph does it by having his characters turn their backs on us and, by implication, on each other. The film begins with Viveca Lindfors having her injured back massaged, and in the first half of the film almost every character has a key scene played facing away from the camera.

As the film progresses, however, the characters gradually turn around. When Keith Carradine's maid (Sissy Spacek) strips to the waist to do the vacuuming, the whole scene is played from behind. But later, when a photographer he's also involved with (Lauren Hutton) strips as well to work in her darkroom, though she does so with her back to us she turns abruptly to face the camera once her top is off. And in the film's penultimate scene Geraldine Chaplin announces to Carradine from off camera, "I'm naked now," whereupon the shot cuts away to a frontal view revealing that she is indeed. These three scenes plot the course of an arc that passes through many other scenes as well turning the film around, literally changing the attitude we see in it 180 degrees.

The attitude Rudolph is trying to turn away from is the cynical and ridiculing one that typifies Altman's own films. Unlike Altman, Rudolph didn't work his way into feature filmmaking through years of industrial films and TV work, and consequently Rudolph doesn't have Altman's jaundiced view of Hollywood and the entertainment industry in general. This is the only world Rudolph has ever known, at least professionally, and so he's more insular in his view of it and fonder of its peculiarities. The sub-title of *Welcome to L.A.* is *City of the One Night Stands*, and the lyrics of one of Baskin's songs for the film go in part, "Sure it hurts (still it feels pretty good) to be livin' in the city of the one night stands." By the end Rudolph wants his whole movie to "feel pretty good" in that confiding, parenthetical way. Unfortunately, however, Altman's antic, vignette style is suited only to Altman's own, icier view of such a world. Rudolph seems a bright and likely lad—bright and likely enough, anyway, to be uncomfortable merely duplicating *Nashville*. But his is the usual assistant director's dilemma. If he *had* found a style more suitable to his true, fellow feelings for his characters, *Welcome to L.A.* probably would have been *The Sound of Music* all over again.

COLIN L. WESTERBECK, JR.

POETRY AND POWER

The Later Robert Frost

SAUL MALOFF

ROBERT FROST called himself a "God-damned son-of-a-bitch . . . a selfish person who had dragged people roughshod over life . . . always a person who had his way, a God-damned son of a bitch and don't let anyone tell you different." The first two volumes of Lawrance Thompson's immense biography contained much supporting evidence for the charge; the third, final, posthumous volume (co-authored and completed by Thompson's assistant R. H. Winnick following the former's death in 1973 and covering the years from 1938, which marked the death of Frost's wife, to 1963, the year of his own death) continues to amass further depressing evidence.*

What Frost had in mind when he called himself by his proper name he didn't say and we can't know, but it is not unreasonable to suppose that at the time of his wife's death he was casting a long backward glance, not at fond memories, but ever the darker side of his life. Grief—and he suffered a terrible bereavement, a kind of madness—was not his only emotion or even, on the evidence, his principal one: he was tormented that in her waning hours she did not call him to her bedside, nor offer to "forgive" him for the anguish he had brought her. Recalling her long punitive silences he took her final silence as a final reproach and punishment. Bereft, "abandoned," terrified, "in a reckless mood and a dangerous one left thus lying around loose in the world," he felt panic and behaved wildly, erratically, demanding that his well-married friend Katherine Morrison leave her husband (and his friend) Theodore Morrison forthwith and marry him. Their friendship never having been in any sense amorous, the startled and shocked woman of course refused him and went on to say that, were she free and

*ROBERT FROST: *The Later Years, 1938-1963* by Lawrance Thompson and R. H. Winnick (Holt, Rinehart & Winston. pp. 468. $17.95)

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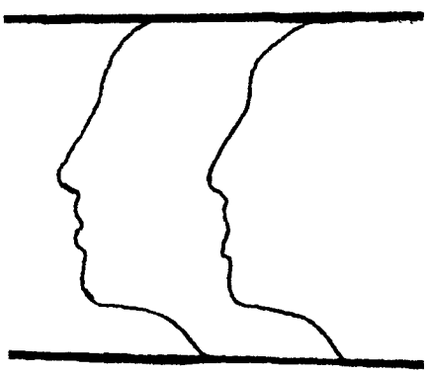
both of them twenty years younger, the idea would still be no less out of the question; which did not prevent him from continuing to bedevil her—and capitalize on the Morrisons' affection, solicitude, and grave concern by making her the next best thing: his lifelong "devoted secretary," nurse, companion, confidante, in a word his "wife."

The scene both of the self-accusation and the Morrison "matter" was the Bread Loaf Writers' Conference, of which Morrison was Director, Frost a member of the faculty. Archibald MacLeish, came to read his work and then at the height of his reputation, blocked out some of the limelight which until then had shed its radiance on Frost alone. Accordingly, throughout MacLeish's reading Frost created a nuisance, rustling papers, making insulting remarks about the quality of his rival's verse which were audible to the audience as well as to the reader, and finally—in the event that not quite all eyes were upon him—striking a match and setting fire to a batch of papers and then beating out the fire and waving away the smoke. As if that weren't enough, he went on baiting and insulting MacLeish until his devoted old friend Bernard De Voto felt compelled to cry him down. At the conference's end, De Voto, referring to Frost's conduct toward MacLeish and toward the Morrisons, said: "You're a good poet, Robert, but you're a bad man."

Extreme as it is, this is no mere isolated instance of aberrant behavior on the part of a distraught man; the flood of evidence rules otherwise. True, he wrote his old friend Louis Untermeyer, also present at Bread Loaf and also greatly distressed: "I've been crazy for the last six months. I haven't known what I was doing. . . . Do you think I am still living in this world? Tell me the truth. Don't spare me'"; and, true, he wrote De Voto that he was "a bad bad man"; but contrition, humility, abjectness were among the bewildering array of faces he wore—weapons, it might be said, in the arsenal of a man who always "had his way." As for MacLeish, or Carl Sandburg, or anyone else who dared share billing, well, Frost made no secret of his condition for going anywhere, doing anything, that he be "the whole show." John Kennedy worried that Frost might upstage him at his Inauguration; the worry was justified; if the poet didn't quite succeed in capturing the whole show, it was a near miss and it wasn't for want of trying.

These are the glory years, with Frost, his reputation secure, on his way to becoming his legend—the good gray poet, our national bard, uncrowned laureate and revered sage in his favorite disguise as hard-scrabbled Yankee



farmer and hayseed philosopher. To our exhaustion (but not his, as he was tireless in their pursuit), the record of the "later years" is sodden with the honors, both unsought and sought unashamedly, that he reaped: prizes, awards, medals, honorary degrees, more than twenty-five of them, including the two he coveted most, from Oxford and Cambridge, along with special lectureships at Amherst, Harvard, Dartmouth, the consultancy in Poetry at the Library of Congress, and of course invitations to speak and read everywhere. The passion—the lust—for acclaim, feeding on itself, was boundless. He almost declined a State Department invitation to represent the U.S. at an international writers' conference in Brazil because . . . there would be other writers there; and cut dead William Faulkner, the other American representative, because . . . he was there, and seen to be there. When officials asked him to go on a cultural "mission" to England he had first to be assured that the "demand" for him came from the highest levels in both countries—from Dulles and Eisenhower and the heads of Oxford and Cambridge—and with assurances of honorary degrees. His cunning maneuvering toward this end doesn't bear telling, nor does his campaign to exact an invitation, via his carefully cultivated acquaintanceship with Sherman Adams, to dine with Eisenhower (who finally asked him to a "stag party" at the White House). From the General to Kennedy was an easy leap for this deep-dyed hater of Roosevelt, the New Deal, the "welfare state" and other insidious alien conspiracies to subvert American character and manifest destiny. And nothing so civil as radical disagreement with opposing perspectives: at a symposium at Kenyon College he refused to follow Harold Laski to the podium though he was willing enough to follow the elder Robert Taft—after swallowing his disinclination in the first place to participate in *any* symposium; nor did he stick at savaging, both publicly and privately, Henry Commager as a "Red" when, in 1947, in a once-celebrated article, the historian assaulted the equation, already hardening into ideology, of "loyalty" and supine conformity. A scourge of the dead as well as the quick, he called Shelley a "darn liar" when, while visiting Oxford, he was reminded of the poet's expulsion from the university for writing an atheistic article which he vigorously denied having written. "He's like our Communists. Don't have the spunk to stand up like men and say what they are."

But power was another matter: before power one bows very low. He thanked Sherman Adams, who was soon to make vicuna a household word, for granting him access to the "ruler of the greatest nation in the world" (he had a peculiar affection for the word "ruler" and an eccentric understanding of "democracy" and groveled before Kennedy, who broke his heart

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by withdrawing into a cold presidential silence when Frost, returning from his talk with Khrushchev in Russia, reported, grossly inaccurately—and worse than that recklessly, dangerously—that the Russian had pronounced the U.S. too decadent and "liberal to fight." Kennedy, it will be recalled, was curiously sensitive to such charges, and it is worth noting that the episode occurred shortly before the "missile crisis" when the President and his courtiers appeared willing that we all burn by way of refuting the calumnious affront to his manhood.) About Frost's officially-sponsored trips abroad there is a strong sense that he thought of himself as a visiting head-of-state bound on a mission of the gravest and most delicate portent. He let it be known there was no point in his going to the Soviet Union if he couldn't see Khrushchev. Ahkmatova, though he was taken to see her, meant nothing to him; no more than did Chukovsky and Paustovsky. Speaking on "American Civilization" at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem he observed that he would not *speak* on it . . . he *was* American Civilization. There is every reason to suppose he meant just that.

But grandiose pretensions are always absurd and sordid; the great tests of character are enacted on a smaller, more modest scale. The mortal enemy of the welfare state accepted for years a substantial monthly payment from the collector Bernheimer in exchange for various literary items, an arrangement on which Frost defaulted though he went on cashing the checks. Yet when his patron was forced by dire need to sell his collection at auction instead of bequeathing it to a library as he would have wished, Frost let it be known he'd been betrayed, failing the while to mention the payments and lying outright by claiming he'd made a gift of a particular item for which he had in fact been rather handsomely paid. In a related way, though MacLeish was the prime mover in obtaining Ezra Pound's release from St. Elizabeth Hospital, Frost overcame his initial reluctance when the winds of opinion shifted and thereupon, happening to forget MacLeish's initiating and propelling role, claimed decisive credit for what could be made to seem a heroic intervention and act of mercy. Again, it is worth noting that his original judgment in the case of Pound (who was the first important champion of his poetry at a time when he was wholly neglected at home) that he was both crazy and a traitor was somewhat softened by his discovery more than thirty years after the fact of a favorable review which Pound had written in 1914 of his first significant book, published in England. Poor old Ezra; a man who had once recognized excellence when he saw it couldn't be wholly mad nor wholly a traitor, could he? The same deep flaw of the spirit that brought Frost to urge, pleadingly, of a White House assistant that he "needed all the honors he could get" reduced him to the cruelty of ridiculing De Voto on the score of his psychiatric history (he had followed the critic to Indiana University and met there a group of faculty members who made the mistake of speaking very highly of De Voto) and to say "curtly, in a sullen voice" to a lady who thought well of his longtime friend and authorized biographer since 1939, Lawrance Thompson, "He's a charming man, but charm is not enough. Is it?" So much for the nastiest, most ruinous of all itches, what his biographers call a "craving for recognition" and "a need for approbation that was almost insatiable."

(A semi-personal note. Some time in 1959-60, not long after the above incident, I met Thompson. He had come to lecture at a university where I was teaching, had heard somehow that I had had conversations with Frost—about anarchism, of all things, and other matters—in the late '40s; and as no scrap of information can be overlooked by a definitive biographer, he asked that I have a meal with him. Between grapefruit and shrimp cocktail I glumly told my tales as Thompson nodded his head—sadly, I thought. Suddenly, without the least preparation, he asked "Do you see these scars?" Until the previous day we had never met and, taken somewhat aback, I was not about to begin scrutinizing him for scars. In any case I notice such things and had noticed none on him. I must have looked away and mumbled something inaudible. "Do you see these scars?" he repeated; and, without waiting for the answer his demand was not intended to elicit, added: "They're what come of knowing Robert Lee Frost too well; of getting too close. . . .")

What are we to make of all this? In an important, and I think decisive, sense none of it matters in the least. It doesn't matter that Frost was enamored of war, perversely in love with war as the great test of a man's and a nation's character (though he himself never fought in one) or that he was (in my view) a benighted reactionary in his bones; or that he could, and often did, behave with the mindless cruelty of a spoiled child to friend and enemy alike; or that he was a vain, selfish, greedy, garrulous old man, an egotist of megalomaniac proportions;

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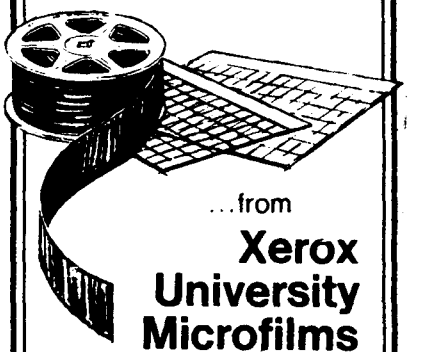

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or that his surviving son went mad and killed himself, that a daughter went mad, and that another daughter (outrageously) "blamed" him for those catastrophes; or that he could be, and at times was, devious, dishonest, a liar and blackguard and fraud. It does not matter, by this view, that he was a a God-damned son-of-a-bitch. So, seen aslant in the shadows we cast, are we all. Finally, only one thing matters. He said of his life once, at his best, in a solemn meditative moment: "All I've wanted is to write a few little poems it'd be hard to get rid of. That's all I ask." Beyond a doubt he wrote more than a few such "little" poems and they're impossible to get rid of. They take hold of us and won't let go; the canonical poems are as memorable as any written in this century. "Read aright," as Frost would say, they are not the folksy, homely verses of his popular reputation—they're neither one nor the other. Read aright, he is at best a dark and (as Lionel Trilling said to Frost's consternation) "terrifying" poet, a tragic poet. His stark truths went into his poems, even if sometimes he builded better than he knew.

Thompson, of course, knew this, and Winnick knows it; but what was to be made of the life as distinct from the art? Iconoclasm isn't the point of the biography though it is in part the effect; it certainly wasn't Thompson's original impulse when as a young man he was delegated by Frost to devote a considerable part of the rest of his life to the poet's life and Life. What can be said for Frost the man is said; where tributes are possible, tributes are rendered; flourishes are added to brushstrokes wherever plausible, and sometimes even when they are not. Without straining, the portrait might have been much harsher than it is—the authors, for example, aren't nearly critical enough of Frost's political pronouncements and other futilities majestically uttered in supreme confidence that the ancient seer speaketh eternal truths when really the tiresome old chap was babbling. All the same it must be borne in mind that the period recorded here was a melancholy time in Frost's career in art, a sad falling-off. His powers as a poet were declining—had declined (indeed his avarice seems to have swelled as his powers sank); save for a rare miracle, the spasm of a dying poet, nothing that he wrote in those years will endure, and much of it is no more than the dimmest echo, or merely bad: a kind of talkativeness where a great talker, faintly recalling the old manner, runs on not hearing the absence of the slow, somber, deep, powerful music and not noticing the awkward embarrassment of his audience. That audience is aware of man's fallen nature, and it surely knows that nice people do not often write great poems. The universe for Frost (he once said he was "prepared for any sadness in the structure of the universe") was a dark, desolate, shelterless place marked by dialectic tension, composed of opposing forces, contraries—good and evil, light and darkness, fire and ice. Out of that sense of things the great poems came, and they yield cold comfort.

BOOKS

THE BEARD-ING OF GABRIEL KOLKO

MICHAEL KAMMEN

Main Currents in Modern American History

GABRIEL KOLKO

Harper & Row, $15

More than just the title of this book evokes memories of *Main Currents in American Thought*, an influential classic which Vernon Louis Parrington began in 1913 and published to wide acclaim in 1927. Like Parrington, Gabriel Kolko is Harvard-educated, a disaffected Populist, and argumentatively selective in his choice of materials, themes, and critical analysis.

Even more to the point, however, Kolko is in many respects *the* modern incarnation of Parrington's better known contemporary, Charles A. Beard. Kolko is a policy-oriented historian particularly concerned about matters of economic motivation and political responsibility for those historical actions which have shaped the world we live in. Like Beard, Kolko is equally interested in both domestic party politics as well as U.S. foreign policy. Like Beard, who became an isolationist (or "continentalist") between 1934 and his death in 1948, Kolko regrets the extent of U.S. power overseas during the twentieth century, and would like to see our interventionism vastly scaled down. Like Beard, too, Kolko is appalled by the manipulative political power which accrues to persons and groups having great wealth. Like Beard (who in 1946 published "Grounds for a Reconsideration of Historiography"), Kolko is a revisionist whose thrust for fifteen years now has been to reconsider the conventional wisdom of modern American historiography. And finally, like Beard, Kolko has enjoyed considerable academic influence through six widely read books, particularly *The Triumph of Conservatism: A Reinterpretation of American History, 1900-1916* and *The Limits of Power: The World and United States Foreign Policy, 1945-1954*.

This new volume is Kolko's most

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general and comprehensive: in part a less-detailed revision and synthesis of his earlier work, as well as an attempt to fill in some of the interstices and connections between those more specialized books (especially for the period 1920-1940). His aim, Kolko says, "is to describe historically the nature and purpose of power and its institutions in the United States, and its evolution over the century since the 1870's—the period of modern capitalism."

His emphasis, not surprisingly, is upon the connections between corporate wealth and political power, upon the various crises of U.S. foreign policy, and upon the changing character of our working class. His conclusions are radical, which is forewarned in the dedication "to the Vietnamese Revolution and the heroic people who made it."

Kolko, a 44-year-old American who has taught at York University in Canada since 1970, indicts the United States for failing to meet and master the fundamental challenges of the twentieth century. He regards this failure as a major trend in modern American history, "for problems and crises have multiplied faster than solutions, and this gap has grown with time."

> It seems quite clear that the main drift in modern American history illustrates the limits of capitalism and its social order in dealing with its emerging difficulties. The weaknesses and tensions of the system, therefore, we must move to the fore, with the growing inability of the directors of the society to control or rationalize it being the central institutional phenomenon over the past century.

Historical specialists may disagree with some of Kolko's particular lines of interpretive analysis, but overall his indictment is powerful, searing, and persuasive. Unfortunately the book is not likely to reach as wide an audience as it deserves, however, because *unlike* Charles Beard, Kolko is not a gifted prose stylist. Apart from some poor phrasing and occasional problems of punctuation, moreover, *Main Currents* presupposes considerable prior knowledge and understanding of recent American history and economics (especially international economics). The book is hard to follow at points because its unrelieved flow of generalizations often seems elusive or abstract.

Kolko is most impressive in his chapters on political economy and foreign policy, but somewhat less so as a social historian. He goes too far, I believe, in repeatedly overemphasizing "America's violence and social and individual disintegration," paying no attention whatever to some of the countervailing sources of stability and cohesion. Kolko also, in my opinion, stresses too highly the immigrants' lack of commitment to remaining permanently in the United States (especially during the period 1875-1925). Some hoped to return to their places of origin, it is true, both richer and wiser; but a great many regarded the United States as an enduring Eden of opportunity and freedom (and not just the Jews and the Irish, as Kolko seems to suggest). The author also strains too hard in order to explain the lack of "any united subjective consciousness" among the industrial working class. Ethnic differences may have been an important factor, as Kolko asserts; but so were their individual aspirations for upward mobility, not to mention their belief that higher status could be achieved within a generation or less.

> *The Presidents and their circles responded to the bankers and businessmen who sought their ears and actions, and any historian who works in the documents of the period [1896-1920] finds innumerable recurrent contacts between important economic leaders and the main political figures both before and during the enactment of legislation they desire or oppose. . . . In effect, within the parameters of a class society, political life was administered according to its class character and political parties, and that fact, perhaps more than anything else, meant that business forces in need would have a reasonable chance to attain their goals, in part or wholly, by resort to political mechanisms. Incrementally, that process has provided modern American history with one of its main currents and defining experiences.*
>
> Main Currents in
> Modern American History

Ultimately, however, this is an important and brilliantly original book—filled with stimulating suggestions for future lines of inquiry—by a scholar who has done his homework thoroughly, and who outstrips most other historians of modern America by constantly seeking to interrelate diverse casual contexts which have ordinarily been regarded as discrete. "The basis of United States foreign policy in Asia outside of the Philippines," he writes, "has become a favorite topic of research and debate among historians, who will never understand wholly the meaning of the issues which arise there save in a global context, including especially Latin America."

If there is a covert villain in the plot, it is not so much malevolent conservatism, or even unrestrained capitalism, but rather those impulses of American liberalism to talk about "progress" but not implement it, and to accept change grudgingly in order to protect special interests. "The essence of American liberal ideology," Kolko contends, "was a broadness which allowed it to subsume the most

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diverse actions and become all things to all men. This universality made such abstractions useful not merely for American liberals but those of Europe as well. Hence its complexity and simplicity at one and the same time."

That capitalism and liberalism have failed us in many ways, Kolko demonstrates persuasively. He does so, however, by neglecting their very real achievements. For that reason one might say that his "main currents" are not AC but DC. They run in only one direction along a single circuit; they illuminate with a harsh, uncomfortable glare; they may shock some readers and make others yearn for the days of candlepower, when more options seemed still to be open, and the promises of American life were infinite.

Messengers of God: Biblical Portraits and Legends

ELIE WIESEL

Random House, $8.95

JACK RIEMER

Elie Wiesel's new work is a strange creative achievement. At one level all he has done is collect and retell old legends. He has simply transmitted some of the many tales that the Jewish tradition has woven around the biblical figures. His book looks like an anthology of previously published material.

But at another level the words "all he has done is retell" and "simply transmitted" in the preceding paragraph are colossal understatements. For what he has really done is take the midrashim, the thousands of disparate, disorganized, disjointed commentaries on the biblical stories that are scattered all through rabbinic literature and weave them into hauntingly beautiful and coherent psycho-biographies and into models and mirrors of ourselves. Somewhere in this book Wiesel has a metaphor about what midrash does to Bible that also expresses what Wiesel has done to midrash. He says: "Midrash is to Bible as imagination is to knowledge." He means by that that the biblical stories are the base, the bare bones, around which midrash creates new realities.

An example may make the point. The Cain and Abel story in the Bible is so brief, so cryptic, that we know almost nothing at all about its meaning. Any school child knows what happened; no philosopher knows why. All we have is a couple of lines: that they were brothers, that they both brought gifts to God, that God favored one's gift and not the other's, that one became depressed, that they quarreled, that one killed the other, that God asked him why, and that he became an exile forevermore. That is all we know, and we are left with more questions in our souls than there are words in the story: Where were the parents? Why did God favor one's gift over the other? Why was one depressed? Why did they quarrel? What did the first death feel like? to the victim? to the victor? What did it mean? Why did God let it happen? Why did God ask why? These and many more whys come at us from every word of the story. And to all these whys the midrash responds. It responds with answers which themselves become questions, with becauses which lead to new whys. Why did Cain kill? Because he didn't realize what killing was, says one midrash. Because it was God's fault, if God had not given him free will and envy and temper, and had not made weapons, it would not have happened, says another. Or perhaps because he wanted to shame God or shake God or pay back God for what He did to Adam is another possibility, or perhaps it was out of economic, or sexual, or religious rivalry, the very same reasons that people have killed forever since, or perhaps . . . perhaps after all these possible reasons, and in spite of all these reasons, and because of all these reasons we simply do not know why he did what he did—or why we do it too.

And Abel? Why did he deserve to die, what did he do? Perhaps it was because of what he didn't do. The text says that Cain's face was sad after God rejected his gift, and then it goes on with the story. That suggests that Abel saw his brother, the only brother he had in the whole world, sad and depressed and he did not say anything. And perhaps this is the sin of which he, as we, was guilty. He simply remained aloof, indifferent, unconcerned. No doubt he was doing other things, perhaps holy things, at the time, as Wiesel puts it, but when your brother is suffering no one has the right to think of better things, even of holy things. When someone close to you is suffering, he comes first. Even if his pain comes from God, his pain gives him priority. To watch over a person who grieves is a more urgent duty than to think of holy things. Abel did nothing, and this was his sin, as it is ours.

There is much more within the story. Between the lines, between the letters, there is God who does bear part of the responsibility, who accuses and is accused. There are all the future unborn generations that could have come from Abel who die with him when he dies, and who make his death such a sin, such a waste. There are the old parents, Adam and Eve, the world's first parents, who come back on stage at the very end of the story, and bury their child, the first parents to ever have to do that, and who then go on to make love and give birth to a new child, whom they name Seth. How grateful we must be to them for doing that, for two reasons—for showing us how to begin again, and so that we can now be the descendants of Seth instead of the children of Cain the Killer or of Abel the Victim. It means that they are only our uncles now and that we are not doomed to repeat their ways forever.

And now see how gradually, imperceptibly, but surely the whole focus of our reading has changed. Suddenly we realize that we are not just playing detective games with a cryptic tale or doing intellectual exercises with a re-

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silient text—we are confronting ourselves in the biblical-midrashic mirror. We are not judging Cain or Abel, we are seeing ourselves, exposed faster than any analyst's probings could. We are on stage, on trial, with them, with God. Suddenly it is no longer an interesting ancient legend, as the Greek myths are; it is our life and the meaning and measure of our days that we are reading about. It is we whom God is asking, "Where is your brother?" through the biblical tale. It is we who have kept silent, we who have been violent, we who are now in exile.

To be able to do that, to make us see ourselves as we really are by means of the ancient words, is no "simply," no "merely" as we thought at first reading. It is art, and creative achievement of the highest order. It is the kind of art that draws us, pains us, and makes us grateful. To read this book is an esthetic and an intellectual experience, but much more than that, it is a voyage of self-discovery and self-recognition. Its pages can be read at two levels, as commentary on the ancient words and as commentary on our own situation, and perhaps they are the same.

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IN BRIEF

STRONG, LOVING AND WISE: PRESIDING IN LITURGY, *by Robert W. Hovda, The Liturgical Conference, $6.95.*

As the fifth in a series of manuals published by the Liturgical Conference, this sensitive, informed discussion focuses on the celebrant's role in "the ordinary Sunday celebration in most local church units." The author, a longtime member of the Conference, cites with understanding and appreciation the essential writings of Victor Turner, Herman Schmidt, and David Power, and provides a good introduction to the problems facing any man or woman who presides in liturgy or wishes to train those who do.

Calling for "a radical break with habits and customs of long (and 'good') standing" and recognizing the need for the training, time, and budget that any fundamental change requires, Hovda addresses many of the fundamental questions that Christians face in moving from doctrine-centered to people-centered religious celebrations, and his summary deserves a thoughtful reading by anyone seriously interested in religion. Although unnecessarily generalized and theoretical, it is still the best writing by an American on the subject. Like numerous writings on education that recommend student-centered curricula, however, it fails to provide working models of just what the teacher does from day to day, and could have been strengthened by specific references to individuals and communities that have already succeeded in accomplishing what Hovda challenges us to do. Let's hope that the next manual includes practical proposals and concrete alternatives, with a multiplicity of liturgies, chairs, and models. MICHAEL TRUE

THE HARD-BOILED DETECTIVE: STORIES FROM BLACK MASK MAGAZINE, 1920-1951. *Edited by Herbert Ruhm, Vintage, $2.45.*

THE PULPS, *edited by Tony Goodstone, Chelsea House, $7.95.*

JUNGLE TALES OF TARZAN, *by Burne Hogarth, Watson-Guptill, $5.95.*

Yes, Virginia, there was a time when you didn't have to travel in search of heroes, à la Joe McGinniss. They were as close as arm's reach. You picked up your favorite pulp magazine or comic strip, and there they were: tough, clean, quick, perceptive creatures doing honorable battle with forces in and out of this world, contending with evils as mighty as the mind could conceive, and facing perils that bordered on the unspeakable—except for a penny-a-word and few-bucks-an-illustrated-strip nothing was unspeakable or undepictable, within prevailing moral decencies, of course.

The pulps and the comic strip flourished in the 1920s, '30s and '40s. Their resurrection as latter-day paperbacks comes partly as a result of cyclical nostalgia crazes, but also in belated realization that in that magazine fiction and those pictorial images resided a distinct art form—not the art of Inness or the form of Poe the mystery writer, but an art form worth a second look and a second enjoyment, if not more permanent enshrinement.

The practitioners of the pulps had to be good to have made it as many did, into fashionable literary circles—MacKinlay Kantor, for instance, Ray Bradbury, H.P. Lovecraft, Edgar Wallace, Max Brand, Thomas Lanier Williams, known as "Tennessee." And the comic-strip artists had to have had unique talents—some of them, at least—to have achieved the renown that belongs now to many, including Burne Hogarth of Tarzan fame, honored with two major exhibitions at the Museum of Decorative Arts at the Louvre in Paris.

The books here are a perfect sampling of an earlier craft, beginning with Herbert Ruhm's collection from *Black Mask*, the magazine founded by H. L. Mencken and George Jean Nathan, no less. It featured such writers as Raymond Chandler, Erle Stanley Gardner, Peter Collinson. . . . Peter Collinson? Well then, how about Dashiell Hammett? And it made the American detective story a genre all its own, one in which language danced and, in Ruhm's words, "individual conscience, wit, or cunning triumphed rather than any social order."

Tony Goodstone's book gives this, plus more. It has the feel, quite literally, of the old pulp-paper magazine—and, thanks to offset photography, the format. (Don't miss those marvelous reproductions of the advertisements that dominated the pulps!) And it expands the list of pulp writers to William E. Barrett, Richard LeGallienne, Paul Gallico, Edgar Rice Burroughs. One could go on.

Finally, Burne Hogarth. Tarzan was, to be sure, the brainchild of Bur-

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roughs. As in *Jungle Tales of Tarzan*, Hogarth adapted Burroughs and developed story lines of his own. But forget those yarns and look again at Hogarth's art: the human figure, the animals in motion, the exotic, phantasmagoric jungle growth. How is it possible for those of us who feasted for so many years on the Tarzan comic strip to have been blind to the fact that the art in fact overwhelmed the story—or should have. Nothing comparable is being done today, except perhaps by Harold Foster of the Prince Valiant strip.

The word and picture "scribblings" of yesterday were, in sum, not so artistically contemptuous as once pegged. Nor so frivolous. Indeed, they loom light years ahead of much of what passes today as "serious" work. Check these three books and see for yourself.

JOHN DEEDY

THE POETRY OF CIVIC VIRTUE: ELIOT, MALRAUX, AUDEN, *by Nathan A. Scott Jr. Fortress Press, $8.50*

Professor Nathan Scott Jr. has written a highly intelligent and difficult critical study of Eliot, Malraux and Auden, who, he says, "state a kind of case . . . that the vocation of literature is to celebrate not the various and sundry commissars who tyrannize us but the City which they betray." Scott uses the word City both in the literal and spiritual sense. He means the Human City, as well as the urban centers where people gather to build civilization.

Notably, the words civilization, civic and city all come from the same root, and are all intertwined in Scott's conception. He has had enough of the radical solitariness preached by so many modern writers, and he examines an alternative.

His chapter on Auden is the best, although he is not convincing in explaining Auden's withdrawal late in life from the theme of social responsibility that he pursued in his early poetry. His chapter on Eliot concentrates on Eliot's later work, while the chapter on Malraux is exhaustingly inclusive.

The problem with this book is its relentless pedantry, which produces an anguished prose that is not only difficult to read, but ironically, exemplifies the very alienation between thought and expression that Scott would ridicule. The sentence with the phrase from which the book's title is taken, for instance, runs to 135 words, and employs a syntax as unnatural as Heidegger's.

Here, moreover, is a footnote to an expression so common that it need not be quoted in the first place:

> The phrase is that of an eyewitness of Cranmer's martyrdom (as recorded in John Foxe's *Book of Martyrs*), quoted by Anne Ridler in her Introduction to Charles Williams's *The Image of the City*, p. xlvii.

Need one say more?

PHILLIP CORWIN

Steinfels (Cont.)

by opinion polls. Nonetheless, there is no doubt that participants quickly abandon much of the detail of their positions in an atmosphere like Detroit's. The result is flawed, not because it reflects some wild and unrepresentative swing to the left or the right, but because the careful crafting of recommendations becomes impossible.

My conclusion from all this is obvious: the consultative process in the Church must be extended and strengthened. Exactly how? A two-chamber assembly? Diocesan congresses? Biannual sessions? I don't know, and I don't think we should mirror current secular structures unthinkingly, and I realize serious thought must be given to the teaching office of the bishops, and I etc., etc., etc. But these are the problems—or rather the opportunities—about which the bishops should be consulting theologians, social scientists and "political" thinkers of various sorts. They should be preparing for a May meeting that does not abandon the process that was their own brave innovation; they should keep faith with Al Smith's wise maxim—that the solution to the problems of democracy is more democracy.

CORRESPONDENCE

(Continued from page 195)

essential change. The priesthood is not changed by allowing gentiles, Chinese or women to be priests. It would be ridiculous to have a concelebration representing every conceivable category at the altar . . . it just plays into the hands of those who think that women as priests are extraordinary. . . . They resemble Christ in his essential humanness and therefore are eligible for the priesthood.

(Or if further argument is needed: Bread and wine are part of Communion, but either bread or wine contains the whole of the sacrament.)

I find this dual-sex ingredient another fad that only discredits the full human priesthood of the man or woman consecrated by the Church.

JOAN LORENTZ

Washington, D.C.

To the Editors: Re "More on Women in the Church" [Feb. 18]: The Declaration of the Congregation for the Doctrine of Faith has set forth reasons why "the Church does not feel authorized to ordain women to the priesthood." Far worse than the conclusion are the alleged reasons. They diminish the concept of Jesus as fully divine and fully human. They equate the humanness of Jesus and of the Risen Christ with maleness. If Jesus' humanity is thus limited to maleness the humanness of all who are not male is put in question. These reasons thus destroy the self-worth of women who still want to believe in Jesus, who believe that they are capable of "imaging" God and Jesus. Women cannot accept the view that they are not "co-workers of God" but only "co-workers of men."

Such language as is in the Declaration saps the energy of women, makes their identification with the Church an

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embarrassmnet. What women must rely upon is their own truth (which is never consulted) and their hope in the Holy Spirit whose light is being temporarily obscured by the hierarchy. Archbishop Bernardin is right that the Declaration requires meditative study, not only in its references to ministry, priesthood, sacraments and Church—but also in its perception of Jesus and its illogical and unloving view of women.

SISTER ELIZABETH CARROLL, RSM
Staff Associate
Center of Concern

Chicago, Ill.

To the Editors: The discussion occasioned by the "Declaration on the Question of the Admission of Women to the Ministerial Priesthood" prompted me to review Sister Lois Spear's comments on that topic, "Some Practical Observations" [December 17, 1976].

Among the many salient observations Sister Spear makes, I believe two merit much further consideration. The first is that Catholic women seeking peer acceptance with men at any level in the Church must recognize the power base they have and work to expand it. Such an attitude often seems somewhat debased to women accustomed to identification with those wielding even less power than they. Such women, many of them participants in the women's movement, still think and act out of a consciousness formed by witnessing the corrupt uses of power in varying degrees. To overcome this limited perspective, women must both recognize that only the intelligent, compassionate use of power can bring about the positive changes in the Church they seek and work at modeling the exercise of such power in new ways.

The second point is closely related to the above which speaks to the need for women to change and grow in their consciousness of the alternative uses of power. The necessary correlative is that men also must be open to such changes both in women and in themselves. Women must also accept change in their male peers. Men and women must seek opportunities to engage in cooperative experiences both with their own and the opposite sex. Such experiences can lead to the human flexibility we must achieve if we are to evolve new roles for ourselves in both Church and society.

SISTER MARILYN ULINE, O.P.

Commonweal welcomes letters on subjects treated in its pages. Letters of not more than 250 or 300 words naturally have a better chance of being published.

Atomic Garbage

Chicago, Ill.

To the Editors: With reference to the letter [Feb. 4] about your recent editorial comment on nuclear power, it always amazes me that whenever there is the slightest criticism or question raised on the feasibility of the further development of this industry the reaction is immediate and angry. It seems some consider this industry as sacrosanct and any criticism as analogous to finding fault with motherhood, the flag, or apple pie.

The fact is that this type of power generation poses massive risks to the environment as well as the people and their property. Many of these dangers are over the long term and when discovered it will be too late to undo the monumental disaster which will result.

Atomic garbage is piling up all around the country at an alarming rate and it will be highly poisonous and radioactive for thousands of years. Long after the present decision-makers, the financial elite, the corporate pushers and bureaucratic promoters of nuclear power are gone, those of future generations will be stuck with problems without solutions. . . .

GEORGE R. BELL

Merton Query

Toronto, Ontario

To the Editors: New Seeds of Contemplation, one of Thomas Merton's major works, went through a number of versions before assuming final published form in 1962. The earliest version, in Merton's handwriting, is contained in some small notebooks, present whereabouts unknown.

In a letter to his long-time correspondent, Sister Therese Lentfoehr, Merton mentioned that he was giving them to the Honorable Clare Boothe Luce. Mrs. Luce, however, has informed me that she never received them. Nor are they to be found in any of the important collections of Merton material.

May I therefore have the courtesy of your columns to ask if any of your readers knows their whereabouts? This work of Merton's is the subject of my doctoral dissertation; and access to these notebooks, if they still exist, would enable me to give a complete account of a process of which at the moment I can only give a partial account.

(REV.) DONALD GRAYSTON
Doctoral candidate,
Institute of Christian Thought
University of St. Michael's College

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Sacred Scripture: Ninth Annual Institute, August 7-12, 1977. Revs. B. M. Ahern, Richard Clifford, Robert Karris. Write Sister Marianna, COLLEGE MISERICORDIA, Dallas, Pennsylvania 18612.

Institute

BIBLICAL INSTITUTE, Trinity College, Burlington, Vermont 05401. June 19-24. Brown, Collins, MacKenzie, Mowry, Pritchard. Pre-registration necessary. Write: Director.

Dignity

DIGNITY, an organization of gay and concerned Catholics, working for a more informed theology and pastoral approach to sexuality. Write: DIGNITY, 755 Boylston St., Room 413, Boston, Mass. 02116.

Mindanao

An earthquake and tidal wave last summer all but destroyed three Philippine parishes administered by the Columban Fathers. Over 5,000 lives were lost. The agencies that supplied emergency relief have gone. Now funds are greatly needed for rehabilitation, to provide homes and jobs "for those who have lost everything." Gifts for these Mindanao *victims should be sent to:* COLUMBAN FATHERS, ST. COLUMBANS, NEBRASKA 68056.

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